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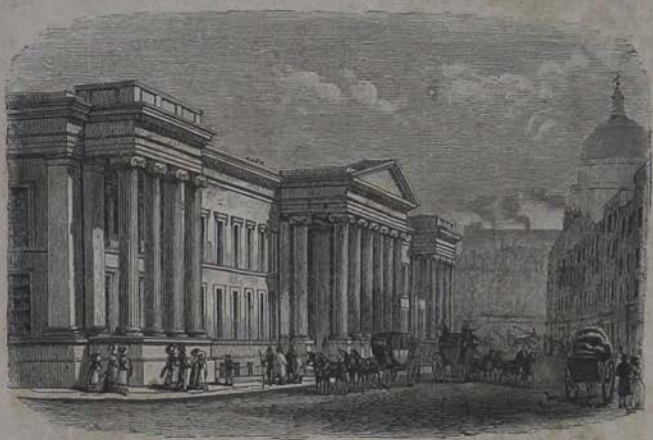
EDMUND YATES:

His Recollections and Experiences.

"Much have I seen and known: cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
And drunk delight of battle with my peers."
TENNYSON'S *Ulysses*.



WORK: 1847–1870.

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IN TWO VOLUMES:—VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to her Majesty the Queen.
1884.
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Engraved by Joseph Brown.

FREDERICK HENRY YATES.

COMEDIAN.

Born 1797 Died 1842

From the Portrait by Lonsdale in the Garrick Club.

LONDON. RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON, 1885.

TO

MY WIFE:

MY CONSTANT COMPANION,

MY WISEST COUNSELLOR,

MY BEST FRIEND:

This Book

IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THIS book is the product of a good memory, a collection of interesting letters from well-known persons, partly inherited, partly formed by myself, and a few diaries, kept in a vague and desultory fashion.

Whether it was or was not worth writing will soon be known: I thought it was, and if any account of my life was ever to be written, I knew that no one could write it so well as myself. Nor, as it seems to me, is there any reason why its publication should be posthumous. I have said in it nothing of which I am ashamed; I do not think I have said any harsh thing of any person, alive or dead; I am certain that I have not said such a thing consciously.

I may add, perhaps, that, so far as I am personally concerned, the period at which this book appears is not inappropriate. My London life—though not,

indeed, my London interests—comes practically to a close with the completion of this record of half a century. I have much to be thankful for, and little or nothing of which to complain; but Nature has warned me that I shall be wise for the future to shun the exhausting ordeal of London, though I hope still to keep all necessary touch of the life of the Great City.

EDMUND YATES.

Brighton, October 1884.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

1831.

Birth—Father's family—Dr. Yates—Uncles—My father: at Charterhouse; in the Commissariat; amateur acting; meeting with the elder Mathews; his imitations; personal appearance; his portraits—My father as an actor—He goes into partnership with Terry—Sir Walter Scott's letter of advice—My mother: her family; her portrait; Charles Dickens's admiration and regard for her—My christening: letter from Theodore Hook; my godfathers; Hook's joke—Our place of residence—The Adelphi Theatre—Adelphi dramas—Adaptations of Dickens's books; John Forster thereon; Charles Dickens on *Nickleby* at the Adelphi; Dickens proposes to dramatise *Oliver Twist*—O. Smith—My father's correspondents, Dr. Maginn, Edmund Kean, Miss Jane Porter, Miss Mitford, Count d'Orsay, Miss Pardoe—A child's recollections: the elder Mathews, Theodore Hook, Lord A. Paget, the Giant, *The Gnome Fly*, James and Horace Smith, Ainsworth, Bunn, Braham, three charming actresses—The Duke of Wellington—O'Connell—Liston—Visitors at the Adelphi house . . . . . *pp.* 1-27

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION.

1836—1847.

My first teacher—My grandmother—An unprofitable engagement—Struggle for novelty—Sam Warren—Buckstone's dramas—Buckstone's prices—Fees paid nowadays—My preparatory school—

Prejudice against actors—The Church and the Stage—Boys' thirst—My grandfather: happy days with him—Low tastes—Newspapers of those days—Spring-heeled Jack—Noble escapades—Notorious murderers—Story-telling—Snuffers, rushlights, and tinder-boxes—Uniforms of police, private soldiers, and postmen—Fashionable costume of the period—Vanished!—Cabs, omnibuses, and stage-coaches—Why shave?—Chimney-sweeps—Changes in London streets—The Farringdon range and mountain pass—Ichabod—I go to Highgate School—Where I "board"—A great character—My father's last illness; "the ruling passion"—Mr. Macready's letter—My father's death; his funeral; newspaper comments; his character—Resting—"Robsperry"—An old-fashioned pedagogue—My studies—My schoolfellows—Charles Lamb's book—T. E. Gahagan—Other schoolfellows—Prize-day—What will become of me?—To go to Germany—We start; *en voyage*—At Düsseldorf—How I learned German—The artists—Freedom—Progress—English settlers—No Christmas dinner—American settlers—The *Kneipe*—A practical joke—Lord Clanricarde's kindness—I begin life in earnest . . . . . *pp.* 28-82

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DAYS IN THE POST OFFICE.

1847—1855.

Small, but certain—Happy days at St. Martin's—My first appearance—The Chief Clerk—No fun now—A practical joker—The bananas—A wonderful cure—"Reported"—Rowland Hill—A cure for excessive animal spirits—My omnibus—A dangerous accomplishment—John Strange Baker: what he taught me—James Kenney—Colonel Maberly: his peculiarities; how he transacted business—Storm-warnings—"Are ye Williams?"—Assisting the surveyor—Deserting my post—Lord Clanricarde's kindness—Introducing the P.M.G.—"The bo'sun"—Lord Hartington—A tyrannical old gentleman—A disagreeable job—The confidential butler—"Old Ben Stanley"—The turning of the worm—I show fight—Sir Rowland's sympathy—Good for the messenger—"In charge:" the journey; the two *courriers;* on board; the voyage—Lord Lyons—Trollope's letter—To Cairo—An Egyptian fair—Egyptian convicts—Lights of the harem—I arrive at Shepherd's—A restless night—Homeward

bound—To Hamburg—Ill—Genial Mr. Tilley—Luncheons—Chop-houses—Gratitude "to scale"—City refectories—"Alton alehouses" Penny steamboats—Popular notions of our work—Small salaries—Sympathetic Colonel Maberly—Nearly lost to England!—The Commission of Inquiry . . . . . *pp.* 83-126

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF MY YOUTH.

1847—1852.

In the Alpha Road—Mr. Edmund Byng: his liking for me; his dinners—"Jim" Macdonald—John Cooper—The cabman's triumph—The Baron—Almack's—Dancing diversions—The Adelaide Gallery—The Polytechnic—Laurent's Casino—The Holborn Casino—Mott's and Weippert's—Vauxhall Gardens: amusements there; too dear—Cremorne—The Coliseum—A small audience—The Cyclorama—The Diorama—"The Overland Route"—Burford's Panoramas—The Chinese junk—Celebrities in the Park: Lady Blessington; D'Orsay; Louis Napoleon; Beauties and beaux—Park riders—Park whips—Social and political celebrities—Eating-houses—Foreign restaurants—Berthollini's—"Slap-bangs"—City taverns—West End restaurants—A revelation—"Simpson's"—Imitations—Fish dinners—Greenwich dinners—Richmond dinners—Supper-houses—Oyster-houses—Night-houses—The Blue Posts—Bob Croft's—Gambling-houses—French hazard—Song-and-supper taverns—The Coal Hole—The Cider Cellars—The "Back Kitchen"—Ross: his song of "Sam Hall"—Evans's—"Paddy" Green—A change for the better—The annexe—The Garrick's Head—The Judge and Jury—Equestrianism—Rowing—Sparring *pp.* 127-174

CHAPTER V.

THE DRAMA IN THOSE DAYS.

1847—1852.

Number of theatres in '47—Her Majesty's: saved by Mdlle. Lind—Mdlle. Lind's *debut*: the struggle for the gallery; nearly crushed—A state performance—Mdlle. Lind's success—The ballet—Royal Italian Opera: *Lucrezia Borgia*—Bunn's operas—Jullien—Pro-

menade Concerts—*Bals masqués*—Jullien's season of English opera—*Début* of Mr. Sims Reeves—Drury Lane—Mr. James Anderson's management—Mr. E. T. Smith's *régime*—The *Monte Cristo* row—The Haymarket—Mrs. Nisbett—My introduction to her—Comedies—James Wallack—The Lyceum—Dickens dramatised—Burlesque—The Vestris *régime*—My first appearance in public—Planché's extravaganzas—Charles Mathews—Mr. Maddox: his stock author; his revenge—The Princess's—Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler—Stars at the Princess's—Charles Kerrison Sala: Macready's hatred of him; Cardinal Campeius—The Adelphi—Wright: his comic powers—Paul Bedford—Half-price—Buckstone's dramas—Madame Celeste—Adelphi farces—The green-room—The Olympic—G. V. Brooke: his success; his death—Leigh Murray—Mrs. Stirling—Lysander Thompson—Mr. Walter Watts: his frauds; his suicide—The St. James's—Lemaitre—Bouffé—C. L. Kenney—Rachel—Old William Farren—Mrs. Glover—Mr. George Bennett—Mrs. Mowatt—*The Admiral Crichton*—Mr. Shepherd's delicacy . *pp.* 175-212

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFLUENCE OF "PENDENNIS."

1851—1853.

My mother's disappointment—Government service not incompatible with literary career—Desultory reading—What "the dear Bishop" would have said to it—I study Macaulay—And *Household Words*—The *Man in the Moon*—The theatrical critics—Longings for fame, and money—I read *Pendennis*—My fate is sealed—Mere business aptitude not enough—Composition in church—"My dear braithren"—Poem in progress: Mr. Ainsworth accepts it; the proof; the printer—Ha! ha!—Indignation at delay—Albert Smith—Dinner at Horace Twiss's—My talk with Albert Smith—We swear friendship—Mont Blanc entertainment—Albert Smith's appearance; his home; contents of his study—Arthur Smith: his original fun—J. H. Robins: his imitations—The Keeleys—Actors in Brompton—J. L. O'Beirne—My first engagement—The *Court Journal*—Pendennis at last!—The Fielding Club: members; a delightful resort—Opening of "Mont Blanc"—Visit to Paris—The *Dame aux Camelias*—The *Keepsake*—The *Illustrated London News*—My marriage . . . . . *pp.* 213-247

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE.

1853—1857.

A new berth offered: declined—I become a householder: the "grounds;" the premises; our *ménage*—Sunday excursions—Mrs. Milner Gibson's receptions—Judge Talfourd's hospitality—Fresh ground—My first book: critical opinions—I call on Dickens: his personal appearance; his kind reception of me; first letter from him—My eldest son's birth and christening—*Cruikshank's Magazine*—My ideal picture of Frank Smedley: the reality—Frank Smedley's characteristics—Cruikshank and Smedley—The magic wheel—*Mirth and Metre*—Mr. J. R. Robinson—Doughty Street worthies—Our Doughty Street house: drawbacks; a dull locality—Angus Reach—An amateur pantomime; repeated before her Majesty; disposition of funds raised—The *Illustrated Times*—Mr. H. Vizetelly—Personal journalism—"The Lounger at the Clubs"—Amateur performance at Tavistock House—Birth of twin sons: Thackeray's letter of congratulation—Madame Sala—Dickens to be godfather—Dinner to Thackeray—Shirley Brooks: his cleverness and determination; attack on the Whitefriars stronghold; its success—Brooks's value to *Punch*—"Slumming" with Dickens—An attempt at a novel—The *Inverness Courier*—Am appointed dramatic critic for the *Daily News:* an enjoyable position—Some of the *D.N.* staff—First appearance in *Household Words*—*Our Miscellany*—My first farce—Mr. J. L. Toole—Another farce—Mrs. Bancroft—A comedietta—Miss Ellen Terry—Douglas Jerrold: unpublished *jeux de mots;* last time of seeing him; his death; his funeral—For the Jerrold fund—Among the editors—Bedford's brother—"Sundays out"—Among the artists—Mr. J. M. Levy . . *pp.* 248-298

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY EDITORSHIPS.

1855—1858.

British Bohemia: Thackeray's description of it; an outsider; my introduction to it; "It's an ill wind," &c.—Mr. Ingram—My doubts—Mark Lemon—I consult Albert Smith—Edward Draper—Godfrey Turner—F. I. Scudamore—W. P. Hale—E. L. Blanchard

—John Oxenford: his genius; why he "let people down easily;" irresponsibility; where his real genius comes out—Mr. G. A. Sala: my first sight of him—The Brothers Brough—"Literary men"—Robert Brough's start in life: at Liverpool; his character; his Radicalism; a remarkable production, *Songs of the Governing Classes*—William Brough—Artists of the staff—The *Comic Times*: short-lived—Our Almanack—Alnaschar—Mark Lemon's device—The basket of eggs falls!—Death of the *C.T.*—Determination—Search for a capitalist—*The Train* is started—An erratic brother: what is to be done?—Robert Brough fills the breach—Contents of No. 1—*The Idler*—James Hannay—"Idlers"—Literary amenities—Mr. Sala in Paris: his work for *The Train*; his journey to St. Petersburg—Newspaper criticism on No. 1—Later contributors—Mr. John Hollingshead—Mr. Moy Thomas—Thackeray on one of our artists—*The Train* stops—Poor Pillicoddy. . *pp.* 299-338

EDMUND YATES:

His Recollections and Experiences.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

1831.

I WAS born on the 3rd July 1831, in a street called, I believe, Howard Place, off the Calton Hill, Edinburgh. The fact that my birth took place in Scotland, or indeed anywhere out of London, where my parents habitually resided, was accidental. It was indeed due to the circumstance that my mother was accompanying my father, who was engaged on a professional tour, and that I arrived in this world some little time before I was expected. Birth.

My father and my mother belonged to the theatrical profession. The former, Frederick Henry Yates, was born on the 4th February 1797, the youngest son of Thomas Yates, a wholesale tobacco manufacturer, who lived in Russell Square, and had a warehouse in Thames Street. Of my father's three brothers, the Father's family.

eldest, Thomas, studied medicine successfully, was accounted very learned and prosperous, and lived for many years at 57 Regency Square, Brighton, esteemed as one of the wisest and most trustworthy of the numerous physicians who in the first half of the century aided in establishing the reputation of that growing watering-place. There are Brightonians yet alive who talk to me of my uncle Dr. Yates, remembering him with his white hair, snowy shirt-frill, Hessian boots or black gaiters, long black coat and gold-headed cane; a man of importance in the town, senior physician to the Sussex County Hospital, and principal medical attendant on Harriet Duchess of St. Albans, who visited Brighton frequently in those days, driving along the King's Road in state, or walking on the Steine with her coffee-coloured pugs. He was the sternest-looking and the kindest-hearted of men, to me was always prodigal of good advice and half-sovereigns, and must have had a large practice, for he lived in good style; and one of my childish recollections is hearing my aunt say that "she never bought black silk for aprons, for the doctor went to so many funerals, and always brought away his silk scarf and hatband." The other brothers, Walter and Charles, neither of whom I ever saw, were in the military service of the Honourable East India Company. The former lived to be a brigadier-general; the latter, known in the army as "Kemindine" Yates, from his gallant defence of

Dr. Yates.

Uncles.

some pass of that name, died a major, comparatively young.

My father, the youngest of the family—he had two sisters, to one of whom I shall have afterwards to refer—received his rudimentary education at a preparatory school at Winchmore Hill, where he met John Reeve, subsequently his actor-colleague, then a tiny boy. His second school was the Charterhouse, where he had Dr. Raine, and later on Dr. Russell, known as "Paw" Russell from his enormous hands, for his head-masters, and Henry Havelock, the future saviour of India, for his contemporary and friend. He always spoke pleasantly of his school-days. My friend, the late Mr. W. P. Hale, son of Archdeacon Hale, Master of the Charterhouse, told me that when a schoolboy he once addressed a letter to my father at the Adelphi Theatre, asking him, on the plea of his having formerly been a Carthusian, for some free admissions to the play. These came by the next post, enclosed in a half-sheet of paper, on which was written, "Floreat æternum Carthusiana domus.—F. H. Y."

My father.

At Charterhouse.

On leaving school my father obtained an appointment in the Commissariat Department, and was sent out to the army then fighting under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsula. I have always understood that he was present at the battle of Waterloo, though of this I have no direct proof; but he was certainly on duty with the army of occupation

In the Commissariat.

at Valenciennes, in November of the Waterloo year, for the late Dr. Quin and the late Lord William Pitt Lennox have frequently spoken to me of his being there with them, a most delightful comrade. It was there that he first gave evidence of the possession of any histrionic ability, and his adoption of the stage as a profession had its origin doubtless in the success which attended his amateur performances with his military friends.

Amateur acting.

His determination to make some practical use of his talents was arrived at in a somewhat curious way. Invited to a fancy-dress ball, he went as "Somno, the sleep-walker," a character then being played by Charles Mathews the elder, in which the great mimic introduced his celebrated imitations. To my father's surprise, Mathews appeared among the guests; but, nothing daunted, the young man sustained his impersonation, and, on being requested, gave his own imitations of the actors usually imitated by Mathews, winding up with one of Mathews himself. The great actor was so struck by the ability—and possibly by the impudence—of the amateur, that he requested to be introduced, and begged my father to call on him the next day. At this interview he inquired about his young friend's profession and prospects, and most strongly urged him to take to the stage.

His meeting with the elder Mathews.

"Commissary!" testily repeated the comedian, after my father had named his avocation, "commissary!

dromedary! Carrying about other people's provisions and getting none yourself! Feeding fat soldiers and dying of starvation! No, no; give it up, young man, and let your real talents find their proper channel." My father took the advice thus warmly urged upon him, and made his first appearance as a professional actor in the year 1817.

The conference was described by my father in one of his entertainments, and afforded scope for the introduction of a very effective and not illegitimate "gag." He told how Mathews complimented him on his performance, and especially on his imitations. "They were excellent, excellent—except one! You can't imitate me!" As my father repeated the words he raised his shoulder, twisted his mouth, and limped up and down the stage, the very double of Mathews. It was a wonderful piece of mimicry, and always brought down the house. His imitations.

In the following year (1818) he made his *début* in London at Covent Garden, appearing as Iago to the Othello of Charles Young, the Cassio of Charles Kemble, and the Desdemona of Miss O'Neil. He told my mother with great glee in after years that one of the newspapers, criticising his first appearance, described him as "a small man of Jewish aspect, by no means pleasing." Whether the critic was right can be judged by the portrait prefixed to this volume. Besides a full-length water-colour His personal appearance.

sketch by Deighton in my possession, there are three portraits of my father which I know. The original of the frontispiece is by Lonsdale, in the Garrick Club gallery; another, by Ambrose, belongs to me; while the third is the property of my friend Mr. J. C. Parkinson, and was acquired by him in rather an odd way. It had originally belonged to "Paddy" Green, forming one of the theatrical collection on the walls of Evans's, and was included in the sale of that collection at Christie's. Mr. Parkinson had noted the picture in the catalogue, and, being one of my most intimate friends, desired to buy it. He accordingly attended the sale, bought three other lots, but before the "Frederick Yates" was put up he was called away by a telegram. When he returned, the portrait had been sold. A year or two afterwards another theatrical collection, that of Lacy, the dramatic publisher in the Strand, came to the hammer at Christie's. Again Mr. Parkinson was present; again he saw in the catalogue "Portrait of Fred. Yates," which eventually he bid for and bought. When he got it home, he found, from a label on the back, that it was the same portrait which he had previously missed, and which Lacy had secured during his temporary absence.

His portraits.

I may say here that from persons who knew him well and who had seen him often, Charles Dickens and many celebrated actors among them, I have heard the highest praise of my father's histrionic powers.

My father as an actor.

Notably of his versatility: he played no part badly, and he could play more parts and more diverse parts than most of his comrades. He was the "stock" Iago of Covent Garden while engaged there, and was reckoned to play it specially well; he was a wonderful Jew, an excellent Frenchman, an impassioned lover, and excelled equally as a cool dandy or a reckless dare-devil. As a proof of this versatility, I note that his second appearance at Covent Garden was as Falstaff, on which occasion Macready played Hotspur for the first time. Dickens, writing to me after seeing Henry Irving, in his early days, as Rawdon Scudamore, in *Hunted Down*, says: "He reminded me very much of your father." Dickens also thought Fechter very like my father in many respects. Of Dickens's general opinion of the acting of my father and my mother we shall see more further on.

In 1825 he went into management on his own account, taking the Adelphi Theatre, with which his name was afterwards so largely identified, in conjunction with Daniel Terry, a clever actor, but who is now best known, if known at all, by his having been honoured with the friendship of Sir Walter Scott. Although great success was achieved by the dramatisation of popular novels, such as *The Flying Dutchman* and Fenimore Cooper's *Pilot*, neither of the partners was a good business man, and the speculation ended in a large loss, Terry's

He goes into partnership with Terry.

share of which was paid by Scott, who was his surety. I find among my father's papers the following admirable letter from Sir Walter. It has never before been published, and it proves, as Lockhart points out in the famous *Life*, how very much easier it was for Scott to give excellent advice than to practise what he preached.

"3 Walter Street, 17 January [no year].

My dear Terry,—I duly received your letter, but am a little alarmed at the subject. My good fellow, you will have hard swimming, though wind and tide be with you, considering the large sums which you have to pay up, and that any check which may occupy a great share of your funds may make that hopeful undertaking precarious.

Sir Walter's letter of advice.

I doubt greatly whether the Paris undertaking can succeed. The french (*sic*) have shown a disinclination to English actors; and for the British, they are, generally speaking, persons who care little about their own country or language while they sojourn in a foreign country. There are about twenty-five or thirty theatres in Paris already, and I fear it would be a very rash speculation to erect or open another. I have no doubt you have taken better advice than mine; *but having undertaken one good adventure, chiefly on credit, I think you should pause before being too sanguine in undertaking another.*

After all, if you do determine on this, I will send you an introduction to the secretary of our Ambassador; but I would have you reflect seriously that there is no royal road to riches any more than to wisdom, and that 'Catch is a good dog, but Holdfast a better.' Your fine family ought to make you cautious. If you can clear the Adelphi, you will establish their future; but a failure which might be brought about by an outlay of capital elsewhere would be an irremediable misfortune, anything short of absolute certainty of success (*sic*).

I am sure you will not suppose that I would knowingly dissuade you from any beneficial plan for securing or hastening

your advancement in life. But I must say, with General Tom Thumb, 'King Arthur, beware!' *Many a thing good in itself becomes ruinous to individuals who have not provided the funds necessary:* and a London and Paris theatre sounds very like playing for a gammon, which may be the noblest, but is seldom the wisest game. Kind love to Mrs. Terry. I write in haste, so make allowance for errors of expression.—Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Readers of Lockhart will see how exactly Terry and Scott were running on parallel lines. After Terry's retirement in 1828, my father was joined in management by his friend and tutor Charles Mathews, and the palmy days of the Adelphi commenced then and there.

My mother.

Four years previously Frederick Yates had married Miss Elizabeth Brunton, a young actress holding a good position at Covent Garden, and coming from a well-known theatrical family. Her grandfather, John Brunton, and, after him, her father, also John Brunton, had for very many years had the management of what was known in theatrical parlance as "the Norfolk circuit,"—a number of towns in the eastern counties, with Norwich for their principal centre; her aunt, Miss Louisa Brunton, a handsome and clever actress, was married in 1807 to the seventh Earl of Craven; and her uncle, Richard Brunton, was in the army, was present at Waterloo, and died colonel of the 13th Hussars, then Light Dragoons.

Her family.

A miniature of my mother in her youth, painted by Stump of Cork Street, admirably reproduced in

Her portrait.

this volume, shows her as a lovely girl; but in my recollection of the last half—thirty years—of her life, her charm lay rather in the softness and sweetness of her expression than in regularity of feature. Her eyes were blue and rather hard, her complexion was dark; but her mouth, furnished with beautiful teeth, was singularly winning, her laugh infectious, and her voice one of the sweetest ever heard. In 1858, years after she had retired from the stage, Charles Dickens wrote to her in reference to her coming to one of his Readings: "Whenever you can come, your presence will give me a new interest in that evening. No one alive can have more delightful associations with the lightest sound of your voice than I have; and to give you a minute's interest and pleasure, in acknowledgment of the uncountable hours of happiness you gave me when you were a mysterious angel to me, would honestly gratify my heart." And again, after her death in 1860, Dickens wrote to me: "You know what a loving and faithful remembrance I always had of your mother as a part of my youth, no more capable of restoration than my youth itself. All the womanly goodness, grace, and beauty of my drama went out with her. To the last, I never could hear her voice without emotion. I think of her as of a beautiful part of my own youth, and the dream that we are all dreaming seems to darken." She was

Charles Dickens's admiration and regard for her.

an excellent "all-round" actress, and raised the heroines of melodrama, or "domestic" drama, into a specialty, playing the characters with genuine pathos wholly unaccompanied by exaggeration. In her private life she was one of the best of women, truly and unaffectedly pious, cheerful, and charitable; a loving, forgiving, and long-suffering wife, a most self-sacrificing and devoted mother.

I do not know the date of my christening, but the record is in the registry of Brompton Church, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Thomas Speidell, rector of Crick in Northamptonshire, a friend of Charles Mathews and Theodore Hook. The latter, who was intimate with my father—I can perfectly recollect seeing him at our house—was present at some little festivity on the occasion, as I have in my possession the following note to my mother: My christening.

"Fulham, Monday.

My dear Mrs. Yates,—Your invitation for the 20th is so very agreable (*sic*) to me that, unlike *your* Victorine,* I'll *not* 'sleep upon it, but say, Yes, with all my heart, at once. I have a great fancy for making Christians, and have already twice this year assisted at similar ceremonies. That our excellent friend Speidell is to be officiating minister on the occasion makes the affair more agreable (*sic*).—Believe me, with sincere regard to Monsieur Frédérique *père*, yours most sincerely, THEODORE HOOK." Letter from Theodore Hook.

* *Victorine, or I'll sleep on It*, a drama by Buckstone, with my mother as the heroine, was played at the Adelphi with very great success.

My godfathers were the Honourable Edmund Byng, second son of the fifth Viscount Torrington—of whom I shall have much to say hereafter—and Frederick Hodgson, M.P. for Barnstaple, known as "Brown Stout," from his size and dark complexion, and the fact that he was the owner of a famous brewery at Bow, whence issued that "Hodgson's India Pale Ale" which, long before the days of Bass and Allsopp, had an enormous sale in the East, and realised a splendid fortune for its proprietor.* The names given to me at my baptism were accordingly Edmund Hodgson, which evoked a joke from Theodore Hook. "Fred, what are you going to call the boy?" he asked my father. "Edmund Hodgson, after his godfathers, Byng and Hodgson." "What, big Hodgson, Brown Stout, the brewer?" "Yes." "Humph!" said Hook, "then you'd much better call him Bingo Stingo!"

My godfathers.

Hook's joke.

At that time, and during all my early childhood, we lived at No. 411 Strand, forming part of the Adelphi Theatre premises, a house which, during its previous tenancy by Terry, had been visited by Sir Walter Scott, and which is described in one of his letters as "a curious dwelling, not larger than a squirrel's cage, which he (Terry) has contrived to

* "For you never were in India,
That you know not HODGSON'S ALE."
Vide "Jupiter and the Indian Ale" in the *Ballads of Bon Gaultier*.

squeeze out of the vacant space of the theatre, and which is accessible by a most complicated combination of staircases and small passages." A small side-door, immediately inside the street-door, and at the foot of a long and steep flight of stairs, gave access to the public lobby of the theatre; and through that door I used to take furtive peeps at all I was permitted, until after I was seven years old, to see of the fairy world beyond. I remember well the bright paper on the walls and the brilliant gaseliers, which I had occasionally had the rare happiness to see alight; but I knew of nothing further. I thought this lobby was "the theatre" of which I heard such constant mention, and thoroughly believed that "the boxes," so frequently referred to, were actual chests, on which, or in which, people sat while the mysterious "performance" took place. My parents had no great liking for their calling, and I was not merely never allowed to visit the theatre, but was kept in as much ignorance, in regard to it and its surroundings, as was possible with my position.

Our place of residence.

This distaste for his profession on my father's part assuredly arose from no want of success, for under him and his coadjutors the "little Adelphi" had become one of the most popular places of amusement in London. It had its specialty as the home of melodrama, a class of entertainment which, having almost fallen into desuetude, seems now to have been suc-

The Adelphi Theatre.

cessfully revived by Mr. G. R. Sims;* and it was a great "half-price" house—"half-price," now entirely obsolete, being the reduced admission-money taken after nine o'clock. It was very cramped and stuffy and inconvenient, but it had always enjoyed a very large share of public favour. In its early days the town had gone mad over *Tom and Jerry, or Life in London*, when produced there; in it Mathews had given his most celebrated "At Home" entertainments, Buckstone's dramas, *Victorine*, *The Wreck Ashore*, *Isabel*, &c., with my mother as heroine, my father in some eccentric part, John Reeve† and the author himself as the fun-makers, and Mrs. Fitzwilliam, O. Smith, Wilkinson, Lyon, Hemming, Cullenford, and many long-forgotten names.

Adelphi dramas.

* "Or in the Adelphi sitting, half in rapture, half in tears,
Saw the glorious melodrama conjure up the shades of years." *Bon Gaultier's Ballads.*

† John Reeve was the principal "low comedian" of the theatre, a man of much humour, and an enormous favourite. So popular was he that his frequent appearance on the stage, when considerably overcome with drink, was generally good-naturedly condoned by the audience. On one occasion, however, and when he happened to be playing a supposed scene of intoxication, he was really so far gone that he could not keep his balance, and fell down. This was too much, and the spectators lustily hissed. John Reeve raised himself with difficulty, advanced to the footlights, and, in thick tones of virtuous indignation, asked, "What's the meaning of this? Don't all of you know that I'm a drunken individual?" The unconscious *double entendre* delighted his hearers, and peace was restored.

Plays adapted from popular novels were favourite subjects for presentation at the Adelphi. Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*, with my father as Arbaces, and Mrs. Keeley—still happily alive, and in wonderful bodily and mental vigour at seventy-nine—as the blind girl Nydia. I have heard my mother speak of this impersonation of Mrs. Keeley's as singularly graceful and pathetic, and of her singing of a ballad, "The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose," as simply perfect. In later years the same actress achieved great notoriety as the hero of a drama made out of a very different kind of novel—Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*, in which Mr. Paul Bedford first made any special mark by his performance of Blueskin.

The genius of Charles Dickens seems from the first to have been the prey of the dramatic "adapter," who cut and hacked, excised and even added, to suit the requirements of his clients. *Pickwick* was, I believe, put upon the stage, with John Reeve as Sam Weller; but it could not have made any mark, and was probably only dramatised for the sake of presenting living semblance of characters which were then in every shop-window and on every drawing-room table; but *Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist* were, at the Adelphi, exceptional successes. That they were so seems to have given great offence to that worthy but very prejudiced gentleman, Mr. John Forster. Dickens himself, as I will shortly show, was greatly pleased

Adaptations of Dickens's books.

with the *Nickleby* play; but Forster, *Dickenso ipso Dickensior*, treats the subject with extorted patronage or hearty grumbling. "He (Dickens) has been able to sit through *Nickleby*, and *see a kind of merit* in some of the actors. Mr. Yates had a sufficiently humorous meaning in his wildest extravagance, and Mr. O. Smith could put into his queer angular oddities enough of a hard dry pathos to *conjure up shadows* at least of Mantalini and Newman Noggs; and even Dickens, *in the letter that amazed me by telling of his visit to the theatre*, was able to praise the skilful management and dressing of the boys, the capital manner and speech of Fanny Squeers, the dramatic representation of her card-party in Squeers's parlour, the careful making-up of all the people, and the exceedingly good tableaux formed from Browne's sketches. . . . Mrs. Keeley's first appearance beside the fire, and all the rest of Smike, was excellent." This, *pace* Mr. Forster, is surely high praise from an author in Dickens's position; but that he not merely was sulkily content, as Mr. Forster would have us believe, but was really heartily gratified by the manner in which the play was produced and acted, the following letter, written by him to my father, and now in my possession, will prove:

John Forster thereon.

"48 Doughty Street, Thursday Morning.

My dear Sir,—I am very glad indeed that *Nickleby* is doing so well. You are right about the popularity of the work, for its sale has left even that of *Pickwick* far behind.

My general objection to the adaptation of any unfinished work of mine simply is that, being badly done and worse acted, it tends to vulgarise the characters, to destroy or weaken in the minds of those who see them the impressions I have endeavoured to create, and consequently to lessen the after-interest in their progress. *No such objection can exist for a moment where the thing is so admirably done in every respect as you have done it in this instance.* I felt it an act of common justice, after seeing the piece, to withdraw all objection to its publication, and to say thus much to the parties interested in it without reserve. If you can spare us a private box for next Tuesday, I shall be much obliged to you. If it be on the stage, so much the better, as I shall be really glad of an opportunity to tell Mrs. Keeley and O. Smith how much I appreciate their Smike and Newman Noggs. I put you out of the question altogether, *for that glorious Mantalini is beyond all praise.*—Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS."

Charles Dickens on *Nickleby* at the Adelphi.

If Mr. Forster was "amazed" by a letter from Dickens mentioning his visit to the Adelphi, how much more would he have been "amazed" had he seen the above letter of praise, in which a second visit is suggested? and to what pitch would his amazement have reached if he had known that I have a further letter from Dickens to my father, offering himself to dramatise *Oliver Twist* for the Adelphi? The letter runs thus:

"Supposing we arrange preliminaries to our mutual satisfaction, I propose to dramatise *Oliver Twist* for the first night of next season.

Dickens proposes to dramatise *Oliver Twist*.

I have never seen Mrs. Honnor, to the best of my recollection; but, from the mere circumstance of her being a Mrs., I should say at once that she was 'a many sizes too large' for Oliver Twist. If it be played by a female, it should be a very sharp girl of thirteen or fourteen, not more, or the character

would be an absurdity. I don't see the possibility of any other house doing it before your next opening night. If they do, it must be done in a very extraordinary manner, as the story, unlike that of *Pickwick*, is an involved and complicated one. I am quite satisfied that no one can have heard what I mean to do with the different characters in the end, inasmuch as, at present, I don't quite know myself; so we are tolerably safe on that head. I am quite sure that your name as the Jew, and mine as the author, would knock any other attempts quite out of the field."

Surely the inference from this is, that Dickens was by no means displeased by his dramatic treatment at the Adelphi. Dickens had so very frequently spoken to me in enthusiastic terms of my father's acting as Mantalini, as Fagin, and as Quilp, and had so often praised the manner in which, under difficult circumstances, the various plays had been produced at the Adelphi, that I was highly amused on the publication of Mr. Forster's statement, and determined at my own time to take an opportunity of refuting it.

O. Smith.

O. Smith, the actor referred to in this correspondence, was a singular man. His name was Richard Smith, but winning renown in the commencement of his career by his performance of Obi, in a drama called *Three-Fingered Jack*, he was dubbed O. Smith, to distinguish him from the multifarious possessors of his patronymic, and remained thus known throughout his life.* Condemned by an odd Fate

* It was Sheridan Knowles who, in his half-blundering, half-witty, wholly Irish way, told O. Smith he was "always mistaking him for his namesake, T. P. Cooke."

to the perpetual portrayal of murderers, robbers, pirates, &c., in private life "he was the mildest-mannered man," well read and informed, a clever water-colour artist, with an air of old-fashioned courtesy not detracted from by a slight deafness. He played demons and gnome-kings as well as villains, and once based an application to my father for increase of salary on the fact that, owing to his being so constantly in dangerous positions, in the midst of fire, going up and down traps, &c., the life-insurance companies would only accept him at a "hazardous" premium. His demoniac laugh, a deep bass "Ho, ho!" was very effective—

> "He laughed, as Mr. O. Smith laughs,
> An inward double-knock."
> *Gilbert a'Becket's Almanack of the Month.*

The visitors to the Adelphi in those days would seem to have been not only numerous, but distinguished. Amongst my father's correspondence I find many letters from Miss Mitford, Miss Jane Porter, Lady Morgan, Mrs. Norton, Miss Pardoe, L. E. L., Lady Blessington, George Colman, Rev. G. Croly, Haynes Bayly, Sheridan Knowles, Maginn, Sam Warren, Theodore Hook, Thomas Hood, Barham, Talfourd, Moore, Luttrell, James and Horace Smith, Edmund Kean, Charles Kemble, Macready, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex (with a present of a gold snuff-box), Count d'Orsay, Lords Chesterfield, Clanricarde, Adolphus

My father's correspondents.

Fitzclarence, Fitzhardinge, Castlereagh, &c., all expressing their thanks for gratification received or expected at his hands.

Here is Dr. Maginn's note, sent with a pear:

"A Pear fresh gathered from Nelson's pear-tree presents its compliments to Mrs. Yates.

Dr. Maginn.

Though not inviting to the eye,
Take me as plucked from off the tree
Planted by him whose battle-cry
Was herald still of *Victory*.
Fit offering therefore, as I ween,
For her who is the *Victorine*."

Kean's letter is very characteristic:

"January 4, 1831.

Edmund Kean.

Dear Yates,—Can I have my usual box to-night? I stay in London but a couple of days, and it will be an indulgence. I detest mixing with the *canaille*. *I like the public's money, but despise them.*—Yours truly, EDMUND KEAN."

Miss Jane Porter.

Miss Jane Porter, possibly not much read by the present generation, but greatly admired by Scott and loved by our fathers and mothers for her *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *Scottish Chiefs*, wants "an engagement for a person in whom I am greatly interested. She was a leading comic actress in a small but respectable company, which used to come annually to Thames Ditton (!), and perform there during five or six years of our residence in the neighbourhood. My venerable mother, and other most excellent heads of the families about, always patronised the company because of the Worthiness of character as individuals." Miss Porter's

description of her *protégée's* personal appearance is delightful: "She is now a middle-aged woman, of a slight airy form, a quick and pleasing countenance, though not handsome, a pleasant and clear voice and genteel enunciation. She would be capable to undertake all old or elderly female characters in comedy, or, indeed, from the still juvenile appearance of her figure and lively countenance, chambermaids and the like would not come amiss to her. She could also lead choruses of peasantry, &c."

Miss Mitford. Miss Mitford asks: "What would be the remuneration for a drama such as you wish? .... Supposing we agree as to terms, would the enclosed Incendiary story answer for the serious part of a piece? I think it would; that is to say, I think it might admit of some good scenes for Mrs. Yates, whom I have never had the pleasure of seeing perform, but who is said by every one to be a most sweet, affecting, and natural actress. .... I saw a part of the *Wreck Ashore* at Reading, but could not sit it out. I was so terribly nervous that the motion of the latch and Grampus's face through the window seemed to me like actual housebreaking, of which I have great dread. I have an equal aversion to guns and explosions of all kinds, which may account for my never having been to any small theatre except the Haymarket."

Count d'Orsay. Every one seems to have had what the Americans call "an axe to grind." Count d'Orsay writes: "J'ai

un mélodrame en deux actes à vous offrir, écrit par un des mes amis: l'histoire est tirée d'un ouvrage de George Sand, un des meilleurs auteurs Français de notre époque: c'est intitulé *L'Uscocco.* Les caractères sont bien adaptés à la réunion des bons acteurs que vous possedez à l'Adelphi; et si vous pensez que cela puisse vous convenir je vous enverrai le manuscrit."

Miss Pardoe.

Miss Pardoe writes, offering to translate a play which has just been produced in Paris by Mdlle. Mars, and which is exactly suited to my mother's style: "I am certain that in the *rôle* of Mdlle. Mars you will turn all the heads in London, as she turned all those in Paris." The piece was called *Louise de Lignerolles*, and was, I fancy, played at the Adelphi. Another play by Miss Pardoe, which I recollect seeing, was called *Agnes St. Aubyn, the Wife of Two Husbands.* I think my friend Mr. Dion Boucicault must have seen this piece before writing *Hunted Down.*

A child's recollections.

My memories of that queer little private house over the theatre, and the visitors to its drawing-room, from the window of which I saw the Guards—I think in white fatigue-jackets—marching through the Strand on their way to embarkation for Canada in 1837, and was shown the reflection of the flames of the burning Royal Exchange in the following year, are very clear. I remember the elder Mathews, a

The elder Mathews.

wizen dark man, with one high shoulder, a distorted mouth, a lame leg, and an irritable manner. He took little notice of me save on one occasion, when a pet little black dog, which always accompanied him, sprang up and bit me on the cheek, and then nothing could exceed his remorseful interest. I remember Theodore Hook, bald and bluff, given, it was understood, to bumptiousness and swagger in some houses, but always pleasant in ours. He never needed pressing, but would sing his impromptu songs and cut his jokes with boyish glee. One of these, and a hitherto unpublished one, I think, my mother used to tell. A few friends were seated round our dinner-table when a certain Mr. Rosenhegen called to see my father. He looked into the room, but, seeing the company, withdrew at once. "There, Hook," said a great friend of his, W. S. Streatfield, "you couldn't make a rhyme to that man's name!" "Couldn't I?" said Hook; and with scarce a moment's delay, he called out:

Theodore Hook.

> "Mr. Rósenhĕgen!
> Pop your nose in again!"

Hook, however, must have been a desperate snob, and the sketch of him as Wagg, in *Pendennis*, would not seem to be over-coloured. One day at a dinner-party at the Adelphi, my mother overheard him say to his neighbour, "I wonder whether they've iced the claret?" She at once addressed him

laughingly, "Don't be afraid, Mr. Hook; Mr. Hodgson's butler has charge of the wine!" Mr. Hodgson was one of Hook's "patrons," and a friend in many ways, so Hook collapsed.

Lord A. Paget. I remember my good friend Lord Alfred Paget, then a very young man, standing, measuring heights, back to back with M. Bihin, tallest, best-natured, and The giant. stupidest of Belgian giants, then playing an engagement at the theatre. I remember wandering into the room and shrieking with terror at seeing a singular creature creeping over the chairs and tables with wondrous agility. This was a Mr. Harvey Leach, professionally known as Signor Hervio Nano, a dwarf, or rather a truncated being, with handsome head, fine torso, immense muscular strength in the arms, and no legs to speak of. He played in a piece *The Gnome Fly.* called *The Gnome Fly*, in which, made up as a fly, he crawled over the proscenium, and, I think, journeyed on wires from the gallery to the stage. I remember James and Horace Smith. James Smith, with an ivory-handled crutch-stick, and his brother Horace, coming to read the dramatic version of his novel, *Jane Lomax*, which he had prepared Ainsworth for my mother. Ainsworth, then a singularly handsome man of the D'Orsay order, was a frequent visitor in the *Jack Sheppard* days, and Alfred Bunn. Crowquill. I can also remember Alfred Bunn, and always thought that Thackeray must have sketched the portrait of Mr. Dolphin, the manager, which

appears in *Pendennis*, from him.* John Braham, a very small Jewish man in a black wig, I remember as a visitor; and I have seen Miss Romer, the original "Bohemian Girl," there. I have heard Mrs. Honey—a very lovely woman—Mrs. Waylett, and Mrs. Keeley "trying over" their songs at the little piano. Braham. Three charming actresses.

Walking with my father in the neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament, he was spoken to, on the same afternoon, by the great Duke of Wellington and Daniel O'Connell. He bade me remember the circumstance when I "grew up." The appearance of each of these men—the Duke with his buttoned blue coat, white duck trousers, and high stock with a buckle showing at the back of his neck; and O'Connell, with a round, good-humoured, thoroughly Irish face, and a springy jaunty walk—is perfectly vivid in my memory. Mr. George Jones, R.A., a painter of battle-pieces, &c., who died some Duke of Wellington. O'Connell.

* Here is a characteristic letter from Bunn to my father:

"My dear Fred,—With taste and judgment 'both strong *against* the deed,' I have resolved on coming down to the blackguard level to-morrow, and the wonders of old Drury Lane, the glories of its pageantries, the splendour of its decorations, aristocracy, dancers, foreigners, &c., are all going, going for the small sum of 4*s*. to the boxes, 2*s*. to the pit, and 1*s*. to the gallery.

To Mr. Garrick, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. John Kemble, Mr. Kean, *et hoc genus omne*, I cry, 'Thou canst not say I did it.'—Ever thine, A. BUNN."

years ago, specially prided himself on his resemblance to the Duke of Wellington, and used to "dress up to the character." Some one mentioned the likeness to the Duke, and added, "It must be great, for people in the street often speak to him for your Grace." "Very strange," muttered the great man; "no one ever spoke to me for Mr. Jones!"

Liston.

Connected with the Adelphi house are my recollections of Liston, with his face like a grotesque mask, pendulous cheeks, snub nose, and fishy eyes—a very dull man, as he seemed to me; of George Rodwell, the composer of much beautiful music, but who gained his barrel-organ celebrity by "Jolly Nose" and "Nix my dolly, pals," two songs in *Jack Sheppard;* of M. Sola, a strange blear-eyed old foreigner, in some way connected with music, but who was principally engaged in selling bargains of all kinds to his friends. He sold a watch to my mother, with the curious recommendation, "He ver' good vatch: you vear him two year, and then sell him again." And I can distinctly recollect meeting him in the Strand vainly trying to conceal a full-sized drawing-room looking-glass under the folds of his scanty blue cloak.

Visitors at the Adelphi house.

To us would come across, from the house on Adelphi Terrace, Miss Maria B. Hawes, then in the first flush of her success as an oratorio singer; and from her pretty *cottage ornée*, The Rosery, in

Old Brompton—now pulled down, and with a row of stucco houses standing "where once the garden smiled"—would arrive my earliest literary friend, Mrs. S. C. Hall, bringing for my delectation a copy of her annual, *The Juvenile Budget*, in which she and Mrs. Hofland, Miss Pardoe and Miss Jewsbury, wrote most charming stories for children. To a hurried consultation would come Charles Tomkins and Tom Pitt, the scene-painters, in their canvas clothes, splashed with dabs of colour; or Gallott the prompter; or Sam Lover, with a ballad for Mrs. Fitzwilliam or Miss Fortescue, now Lady Gardner, on whose performance of Barnaby Rudge Dickens used "to dwell with a thorough liking;" or Edmund Byng, my eccentric godfather; or Lord Clanricarde, who in after years proved in the kindest and handsomest manner that he had not forgotten the old days of fun and frolic in "the little Adelphi."

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION.

1836—1847.

It was in the "old Adelphi house," as we used to call it, the private portion of the theatre-premises, No. 411 Strand, that I received the elementary portion of my education, being taught "my letters" by my aunt, Miss Eliza Yates, my father's unmarried sister, who lived with us, and in whom I found my chief playmate and companion. What with incessant acting and very frequent rehearsals—for the "runs" of pieces, now so common, were absolutely unknown in those days, and the entertainment was constantly changed—my mother had in a great measure to delegate her household and maternal duties to her sister-in-law, who fulfilled them with much affectionate devotion. My "aunt Eliza" is associated with my earliest recollections; under her supervision I learned my alphabet from a collection of large capital letters, furnished by the printer of the theatre, and spread out on the floor, where I lay. When I had arrived at the dignity of spelling, I used to check my newly-acquired accomplishment by endeavouring to read the words on the omnibuses, which passed

My first teacher.

the window in such numbers; my great desire, as well as that of my kind instructress, being that I should acquit myself well in the eyes of my grandmother, a rather severe old lady, who was also a resident member of the family. My recollections of her are of the faintest; but I have an idea that she rather sat upon the little household, that she was in the position of one who had seen better days, and that she despised the theatre, while living on its proceeds. I remember, too, that frequent card-parties had to be given for her amusement, and that she did not scruple to express her astonishment and displeasure at the singular conduct of my father and mother, who, coming in utterly exhausted from their work, preferred going to rest to taking a "hand at cards" with the old lady's friends. My grandmother.

There was, in truth, but little chance of rest for my father in those days, and there can be no doubt that his early death was mainly attributable to the perpetual work, worry, and excitement in which his life was passed. To be foremost in the race, to beat his compeers in the production of any novelty, was his great object, and many a time had he to pay for his rashness and want of deliberation. On one occasion a rumour reached London that a great success had been achieved in Paris by the performance of a set of Hindoo dancers, called *Les Bayadères*, who were supposed to be priestesses of a certain sect; and

the London theatrical managers were at once on the *qui vive* to secure the new attraction. Three of them —Laporte, of the Italian Opera; Alfred Bunn, of Drury Lane; and my father—set out for Paris much about the same time. It was *diligence*-travelling or posting in those days, and the man with the loosest purse-strings went the fastest. My father had concluded his arrangement with the *Bayadères* before his brother managers arrived in Paris. Shortly afterwards, the Hindoo priestesses appeared at the Adelphi. They were utterly uninteresting, wholly unattractive. My father lost 2000*l.* by the speculation; and in the family they were known as the "Buy-em-dears" ever after.

An unprofitable engagement.

Novelty was imperative, no matter what shape it might take. I have already mentioned Bihin the giant and Harvey Leach the dwarf, but have said nothing of the "real water," which at one time was contained in an enormous tank under the flooring of the stage, and, like Mr. Crummles's pump and tub, had a drama written for it: *Die Hexen am Rhein* (The Witches of the Rhine), a mediæval romantic play, in the course of which the hero plunged into the tank, and swam about in sight of the audience. Possibly in connection with the tank of real water, and certainly in search of novelty, my father seems to have offered an engagement to Grace Darling of the Longstone lighthouse, the

Struggle for novelty.

heroine of the wreck of the Forfarshire, as a letter from her, amongst his papers, thanks him for his proposals, which she is compelled to decline, as acceptance would be against the wishes of the Duke of Northumberland and the "ladies and gentlemen" who have subscribed to purchase her "a comfortable annuity."

Another proof of my father's readiness to seize on popular topics is to be found in his production of a version of *Ten Thousand a Year*, a novel then creating considerable sensation, dramatised by its author, Samuel Warren, Q.C., from whom there is a very characteristic letter, mentioning that "notwithstanding his engagement in three most important cases at Westminster," he hopes to be in time for rehearsal. Sam Warren.

But there is no doubt that the success which attended the little Adelphi Theatre in those days was the adaptability of its company for developing its "great speciality," melodrama, and more especially of the "Adelphi drama," which was compounded by Buckstone out of ingredients some of which were original, but most derived from pieces of the Ambigu or the Porte St. Martin. Chief in interest and attraction among these were *Victorine* and *The Wreck Ashore*. *Victorine* was the first of those pieces in which a large portion of the action occurs during a dream, and which—modern play- Buckstone's dramas.

goers will remember *Uncle Dick's Darling* as an example—have always been successful. But of all melodramas which I have seen, *The Wreck Ashore* bears away the palm. There was one scene, where two frightened sisters, played by my mother and Mrs. Fitzwilliam, in a lonely cottage on the marshes, see the latch of the door slowly lifted, where the absorbing interest was positively painful. *The Rake and his Pupil*,* *Henriette the Forsaken*, *Isabel*, *or*

* *The Rake and his Pupil* was before my theatre-going time; but I had heard the name when a child, and it was brought to my mind many years afterwards, in a very singular way. I was going to dine with Charles Mathews in the early spring of 1869, and was making my way from the Gloucester Road Station, where I had alighted, and which had not been long opened, across a new and unformed district, as a short cut to Pelham Crescent, where C. J. M. resided, when I saw a man pacing up and down before a small tavern. He was muttering aloud; and as I came upon him I distinctly heard him pronounce the name "Frederick Yates." I stopped, and asked him what name he had mentioned. He at once repeated "Frederick Yates;" then added, "the cleverest actor I ever saw, sir! By far the cleverest! You never saw him, sir; you're too young! But at the Adelphi Theatre, in *The Rake and his Pupil*, to see him act, to hear him repeat 'The Baron Somebody with his hump, and the Baroness Somebody a frump,' it was magnificent!" A little further conversation proved that the poor fellow was a lunatic. He enlarged upon the subject of his wrongs, specially his having been incarcerated, and would not revert to the theatre. But it was a most wonderful thing that I, who alone of all living people would have had the slightest interest in Frederick Yates, should have been passing as he uttered the name. I told the story the next day to Dickens, who was very much struck by the coincidence, and used frequently to refer to it.

Woman's Life, were all of the same category, and written by the same author, whose most successful work of all, *The Green Bushes*, was not produced until ten years later, and for quite a different group of actors.

In connection with this subject, it will be interesting to note the extraordinary difference between the prices realised by dramatic authors for their work in the present day and fifty years ago. I make the following extract from a letter of Buckstone's to my father: "As we have had no decided arrangement about *The Rake*, and as whatever terms we can agree upon about that piece will influence my future doings, I wish to state a few matters for you to think about: 50*l.* was mentioned by you for it, and afterwards an additional 10*l.* for securing the acting copyright in the provinces for twelve months. I was allowed 60*l.* for *Henriette*, and really, with the prices I can now command, I am working at a very low rate in letting you have three-act dramas at that sum. For a successful three-act play you ought, I think, to afford me 70*l.*, such sum securing to you the sole acting right for ever in London, and to you alone for one year, or, say, to the 1st October following its production." And in another letter, in 1839: "I will do your piece for the opening, and a new three-act drama for Mrs. Yates, company, and self, for my old terms for the pair, viz. two seventies. I

Buckstone's prices.

really cannot say less. I now get 100*l.* for a three-act piece, when it only runs a few nights. I bring out a full three-act comedy at the Haymarket immediately on the close of Covent Garden, and am now cogitating a farce for Power and myself."

So we see that at his increased rates Buckstone received 70*l.* for a three-act drama, and 10*l.* for the provincial rights for twelve months. Now I have been furnished by a worthy friend of mine, a writer of melodrama of the present day, whose name, for obvious reasons, I shall not mention, with a return of the fees which he has received for one piece alone, which at the time of writing are within 150*l.* of a total of *ten thousand pounds*, and which are still rolling in at the rate of 100*l.* a week! In this return, America, really unknown in earlier days as a money-producer for the English dramatist, figures for 800*l.* more than London; the provinces, valued by Buckstone at a 10*l.* note, yield nearly 3000*l.*; while Australia, at that time chiefly known as a receptacle for convicts, yields more than double the amount originally paid by my father for the whole acting copyright. Buckstone's mention of Power in his letter reminds me that I once accompanied my father when he went to call on Tyrone Power on some business matter, and that when in Liverpool, during our holidays, we went over the President, the American steamer, which was ultimately lost, with Power on board. I remember a

Fees paid nowadays.

line in a newspaper of the day: "America has lost her President, and England her Power."

I do not suppose I could have been more than five years old, when it was determined to send me to a preparatory school at Highgate, which was strongly recommended by my godfather, Mr. Hodgson, whose nephews had been pupils there. It was kept by an English lady, married to a German merchant named Kieckhöfer, which, I need scarcely say, in boys' mouths at once became "Kickover;" and to her house I was taken one afternoon by my aunt Eliza, in a hackney-coach, amongst the mouldy straw at the bottom of which—and which even now I seem to smell—I cast myself down on our journey up Highgate Hill, and implored to be taken home. A stately but kindly lady was Mrs. Kieckhöfer, presiding over an admirably-kept school; and a jolly old German was "old Kick," her husband, who would call me into his dressing-room and give me pears or rose-lozenges, and talk to me of my father, and specially of my mother—the sweetest woman that ever lived. My preparatory school.

Do you remember in *Nicholas Nickleby* where the newly-arrived little boy is sitting on his play-box? "'That's Belling,' said Mr. Squeers. 'He's a Taunton boy, he is.' 'Is he, indeed?' said Mr. Snawley, *looking at him as though he were a natural curiosity.*" I have so often thought of this passage in later life, when reflecting on my own early school-days. From the

earliest I was always regarded as a natural curiosity. It is, of course, very different now, when Thespis Major is the captain of the boats at Eton, and Tommy Roscius plays in the Harrow Eleven: but in those days actors, if not a proscribed race, were very seldom met with out of such literary or fast-fashionable circles as were brought more immediately into connection with them; and their children were not likely to be found at any upper or middle-class school. To a previous generation belongs the story of the alarmed village through which ran the cry, "The läkers [actors] are coming! take the linen off the hedge!" for fear it should be stolen. And I have heard my grandfather mention his father being followed by an excited crowd through the streets of Newcastle with the cry, "Play-actor! play-actor! Smash his head agen the wall!" Such amenities as these were out of date; but actors were so seldom seen off the stage as to make any of their belongings special objects of half-comical, half-compassionate interest; and to this minute I can see the nudge given, and hear the whispered "son of"—"Adelphi," as I was pointed out to the friends of other boys who had come to see them. Most of these people—one of the first of them was old Mr. Gillman the surgeon, the friend of Coleridge, who died at Highgate in his house—most of these people seemed pleased at the idea of looking at such an exceptional little personage, and

Prejudice against actors.

spoke a few kind words to me; but others would rather recoil, as though the taint of the stage might be contagious. In this place I may mention, as characteristic of the times, that a well-known clergyman, the Rev. Henry Blunt—whose work on the "Pentateuch" still survives, and who was an intimate friend as well as a patient of my uncle, Dr. Yates—declined to meet my father and mother on account of the wickedness of their calling. The Church and the Stage.

I was for four years at Mrs. Kieckhöfer's preparatory school, where, I think, all things considered, I must have been tolerably happy, and where I certainly picked up a fair grounding of education. The disagreeables which remain in my mind were connected with the smallness of the playground and the length of the walks: a long file of boys, two and two, perambulating the country in the hot summer's afternoons, baked by the sun and mad with thirst. Often and often on those occasions have I, lagging behind on some pretext, furtively lapped the water from the horse-trough in front of a tavern door, to the horror of the poor lady-attendant who had us in charge. Our guardians and instructors at Mrs. Kieckhöfer's, with the exceptions of the writing-master and the drill-sergeant, were all ladies; even our dancing was acquired under female tuition, our teacher being a nice brisk old lady—a Miss Dennet, who, with her sisters, had once belonged to "His Majesty's Theatre," Boys' thirst.

and who, I think, made a special favourite of me in consequence of my connection with "the profession."

Pleasantest among these recollections are those of the "Saturday till Monday" holidays, spent with my maternal grandfather, John Brunton, to whom I have before made allusion. A retired actor, living on a small pension allowed him by his sister, Lady Craven, he had not the faintest trace of his former calling, but more resembled a hearty old veteran of the Navy, for which profession he had always had a love, and in which two of his sons had distinguished themselves, one having been second lieutenant of the Hecla in Sir Edward Parry's Arctic Expedition. Sedulously attended by an unmarried daughter, the old gentleman was perfectly happy in his little cottage at Kentish Town—then one of the prettiest and most rural suburbs, and very conveniently situated near Highgate—engaged in the cultivation of his garden, where he had a specialty for dahlias; in reading his newspaper, and in holding his own against a few neighbours at whist or cribbage. To me he was the kindest and most indulgent of men; the cheeriest, jolliest, most lovable of friends. He was full of wonderful stories, he had the heartiest laugh, he smoked a churchwarden pipe—in itself a laxity of morals which commanded my highest childish admiration.

My grandfather.

Happy days with him.

We dined early—two o'clock—in Kentish Town,

and had the most delightful hot suppers at nine; suppers of sprats, or kidneys, or tripe and onions, with foaming porter and hot grog afterwards—grog which I used to sip in a teaspoon from the old gentleman's tumbler as I sat on his knee. Years afterwards, when I might have been of the mature age of twelve, at a Christmas gathering at our house there was some talk about what were the strongest or the pleasantest "nightcaps;" and I frightened most of the company by giving my vote for gin. "Gin, sir!" exclaimed an old maiden lady—my godmother; "what a horrible idea! and from a child, too! Where did you ever *taste* gin?" The old gentleman was present; but even in those days I had some *savoir faire*. I saw the appealing look on his face, and somehow got out of the difficulty. Low tastes.

In the long summer evenings, and when his rheumatism permitted, my grandfather and I, accompanied by his terrier "Vic," would walk across the fields to Copenhagen House—a kind of tea-gardens situated somewhere near Pentonville—or further afield to the Hornsey Sluice-house, a similar resort, which had, I fancy, some connection with the New River, and stood somewhere in the locality of the present Finsbury Park. Both these places have long since been taken down.

In the Kentish Town cottage I made my first acquaintance with the journals of my native land.

There was no penny press in those days, and the finances of the grand-paternal establishment were not in the condition to afford a high-priced daily paper. The old gentleman used to console himself with the *Morning Advertiser*, which was "lent" from the adjacent Tally-ho tavern, and came round with the early dinner-beer. But my newspaper-reading was confined to Sundays, when I devoted myself to the *Sunday Times* and the *Weekly Dispatch*. I suppose the latter was at the height of its fame just then; but the political letters of "Publicola" and "Gracchus" had naturally no attraction for me, and I was far more taken with the glimpses of life revealed in the fashionable novels of Lady Blessington, instalments of which were published by the *Sunday Times*. I have a recollection, too, of seeing that notorious journal, the *Satirist*, at Kentish Town, and of having read from it an account of a duel between Lord Castlereagh and the husband of Madame Grisi, the opera-singer, whose name has escaped me. The editor of this journal, one Barnard Gregory, a clever man, but a desperate scoundrel, afterwards attempted to appear on the stage as Hamlet, but was hissed off by the audience, not on account of his histrionic shortcomings, but of his private character.

Newspapers of those days.

A strange medley of reminiscences of the events which happened in my youth remains in my mind, incongruous and disjointed, and of so diverse a

character that I often wonder how I heard of them. The marriage of the Queen and Prince Albert I recollect well; and remember the windows of the stationers' shops at Highgate filled with a mild pictorial joke, "The Windsor Pear"—a representation of a fine specimen of the fruit, with what theatrical people would call a "practical" rind, which, being lifted, discovered portraits of the Queen and Prince inside. In the same shops the portrait of Cocking, an aeronaut, who was killed attempting to descend in a parachute. Almost my earliest terror was excited by the narrative of the adventures of "Spring-heeled Jack" —a ghost which had been playing up its pranks, springing on to the backs of women and nearly frightening them to death, and the scene of whose adventures some of the narrators, knowing the advantage of local colour, had laid in Highgate. I believe there was no foundation for this statement, though it caused a perfect panic among the little boys at Mrs. Kieckhöfer's; and it certainly was not borne out by another contemporary rumour that the real perpetrator of the practical joke was the Marquis of Waterford, who was not likely to choose that quiet, and very inaccessible, suburb as the place for his nightly exploits.

Spring-heeled Jack.

But at that time Lord Waterford occupied a remarkable position in the public eye as a daring and dangerous practical joker, and every unex-

plained exploit was accredited to him. He was, it was said, rather more than eccentric—the result of a crack on the head which he had received from a *morgenstern*, the heavy club with which the Stockholm watchmen were armed, while carrying on his nocturnal vagaries in the Swedish capital. He had, it was said, sworn that he would catch and shave Mr. Muntz, the member for Birmingham, the only Englishman in those days who wore a large beard. Mr. Muntz, on hearing of this threat, bought a huge stick, without which he was never seen in public. The Earl of Cardigan was another nobleman whose personality was much impressed on my childhood, owing to the notoriety which he obtained in consequence of his quarrels with his brother officers, and the duels arising therefrom. He would seem to have been a man of violent temper and offensive *hauteur;* but he was an intimate friend of my great-uncle, Colonel Brunton, who had brought him to our house, and consequently I was his sworn and only champion at the school. Another theme of discussion amongst us children was the adventures of the "boy Jones"—a lad who was found secreted under a sofa in Buckingham Palace, and whose real reason for being there, unless it was mere childish curiosity, could never be discovered.

Noble escapades.

Murders, too! How we would lie trembling in our little beds as we talked them over! The dread-

ful Greenacre, who cut up the body of his victim, carrying the head wrapped up in a handkerchief on his knees in the omnibus, and who was supposed to have nearly fainted with fright when, on asking the conductor the fare, the man replied, "Sixpence *a head!*"—at least, so ran the story; the horrible Daniel Good, who had special interest for me from his being a coachman at Roehampton, where we had friends; and above all, the monster Courvoisier, the Swiss valet, who murdered his master, Lord William Russell, whose atrocities are impressed upon me from my having heard them much discussed, more particularly the style of defence adopted by his counsel, Charles Philips, at the house of Mr. Clarke, senior partner of my father's solicitors, Messrs. Clarke, Finmore, & Fladgate, of Craven Street, Strand, who resided on Highgate Hill, and with whom I often spent the Sunday afternoons. Mr. Clarke, who was afterwards solicitor to the Ordnance Office, was a man very well known in legal circles, and entertained largely; he and his family were very kind to me, and I used hugely to enjoy listening to the talk of the guests, with whom the house was filled. The Eglinton tournament, in which Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of the French, took part; the Chartist riots at Newport, headed by Frost and Williams; and the frightful accident on the Paris and Versailles Railway, when all the passengers in a

Notorious murderers

long train were burned to death, the doors on both sides of the carriages being locked, so that escape was impossible, are all well-remembered events.

Story-telling.

Even in those my juvenile days I was a kind of news-provider for my schoolmates, and my return from a casual visit home, or to my grandfather's, were days looked forward to by them, as I was sure to bring back some stories which I had heard or read. I was an eager devourer of all kinds of literature from my earliest years, and used to read, stretched on the hearthrug, with my book between my elbows, on which I rested, or at night curled up in a chair, with a candle and the snuffer-tray in close proximity.

Snuffers, rush-lights, and tinder-boxes.

The casual mention of the snuffer-tray, an article never seen by modern readers, brings to my mind a thousand and one changes in things, manners, and customs between the present time and the days of my childhood, forty years ago, which will properly find mention in this chapter. In those days, though there was gas in the streets and shops, and wax-candles for the great ones of the earth, those who could not afford such luxuries were compelled to seek their illumination in tallow-candles, which required snuffing—*i.e.* the removal of their burnt wicks—about every quarter of an hour. "Require no snuffing," was the boast in the advertisement of the Palmer's composite candles, which were the first improvement,

and one variety of which was, I remember, burned in a lamp, forced down on a spring into a socket, and liable to shoot out like a rocket. Mention of Palmer's name reminds me that there were no so-called "night-lights," only a long "farthing rushlight," set up in the middle of a huge tin lighthouse perforated with round holes, the reflection of which on the walls and ceiling was ghostly in the extreme; no lucifers, but a round tinder-box, with a flint, and a bit of steel on which to strike it, and a bundle of long sulphur-tipped slips of wood called matches. The lucifer, or Congreve match as it was called, as originally produced, was ignited by friction on sandpaper, and had a very unpleasant smell.

In those days the "new Police," as they were still called—for they had not long been invented by Sir Robert Peel in supersession of the old watchmen—were very different in appearance from our present guardians. They wore swallow-tail blue coats, with bright metal buttons, and, in summer, white duck trousers and white Berlin gloves. In lieu of helmet they had an ordinary chimney-pot hat, only of extra strength and stiffness, and with a glazed oilskin top. Their rivals in the affections of domestic servants, the Household troops, were also very differently costumed: in place of the tunic they wore a scarlet swallow-tail, with ridiculous worsted epaulettes, a huge stock under the chin,

Uniforms of police, private soldiers, and post-men.

white ducks, and a bearskin shako almost twice the height of that now carried. Neither policeman nor private soldier was permitted to grow moustache or beard. The "General," or country, postman wore a scarlet swallow-tail coat; the "twopenny," or London district, man a blue uniform; a collection for the night mails was made at five P.M., by men who paraded the streets each armed with a bell, which he rang lustily; and many of the despatches of letters from the head-office, then in Lombard Street, to the various sub-offices were made by horse-post, the letters being enclosed in leather valises, which were strapped behind the post-boys.

The dress of the men and women of that time can be studied in the illustrations to *Nicholas Nickleby* and other contemporary publications: "dandies" wore high-collared coats and roll-collared waistcoats, short in the waist; round their necks were high stiff stocks, with "an avalanche of satin" falling over the chest, and ornamented with a large and a small pin connected with a thin chain; and high sharp-pointed—almost Gladstonian—shirt-collars. No gentleman could wear anything in the daytime but Wellington boots, high up the leg, over which the trousers fitted tightly, covering most of the foot, and secured underneath by a broad strap. The great-coats of those days were no misnomers. They were really enormous garments, adorned with

Fashionable costume of the period.

several capes and deep pockets; they were Chesterfields, Petershams, Taglionis, Sylphides; and well I recollect some splendid driving-coats, ornamented with enormous mother-o'-pearl buttons as big as crown-pieces, with pictures on them of mail-coaches going full speed, which were exhibited to admiring crowds in the tailor's window in Regent Street. Afterwards came the neat paletot, the blanket-like poncho, the blue pilot, and the comfortable Inverness. Some old gentlemen wore cloaks, too, in my youth; and I have a dim recollection of one kind, properly, I believe, called *roquelaure*, but known to the London public as a "rockelow."

Other personages of the streets, common in those days, have long since disappeared: the dustman, with his call "Dust O!" and his ever-ringing bell; the "buy-a-broom" girl, with her Dutch garb and *jödling* voice; the thin Turk, turban-topped, and vending rhubarb from a tray suspended from his neck; the Jew boys who hung about the coach-offices, with their nets of lemons or oranges, and were closely elbowed by the peripatetic cutler, the blades of whose knives were always open, and constantly being polished and sharpened on a tattered leather glove. Gone is the three-hatted, bag-bearing Jew, with his never-ceasing cry of "Old clo', clo'!" gone are the Quakers—the men broad-brimmed, shovel-hatted, stiff-collared, and gaitered; the women

Vanished!

generally pretty, with hideous bonnets and pretty dove-coloured raiment.

Well do I recollect the introduction, simultaneously, I imagine, of the hansom cab—then called "patent-safety"—and the four-wheeler. Before them we had the lumbering musty pair-horse hackney-coach, which was the decayed and disused "chariot" of former greatness, or the two-wheeled cabriolet—a dangerous vehicle, with a hood for the fare, and a tiny perch by his side for the driver, and which is to be seen in the illustrations to *Pickwick*, where Mr. Jingle first appears on the scene. People nowadays will smile to hear that for years after their introduction it was considered "fast" to ride in a hansom, and its use was tabooed to ladies. There were omnibuses, but nothing like the present commodious vehicles; narrow, cramped, with a seat across the end, with flat roof, and no "knifeboard" accommodation outside. In those early days of railways the carriages had not attained their present amount of comfort: the first-class was, of course, an immense improvement on the cramped and stuffy mail-coach; but the second-class had no linings or cushions; and the third-class was little better than a cattle-truck. Of the mail-coaches themselves I have not much recollection, though, as the "Great North Road" lay through Highgate, I must have seen them very often. But I well remember the Brighton coaches, and my

Cabs, omnibuses and stage-coaches.

astonishment at my father shaking hands with the coachman, who was Sir Vincent Cotton; and the laughter at my godfather, Edmund Byng, when he told us that, passing by the White Horse Cellar, a coachman had familiarly tapped him on the shoulder with his whip, and, looking up in a rage, he had recognised his "rascally nephew, Edward Thynne."

Clean-shaven faces were uncommon; a pair of "mutton-chop" whiskers was *de rigueur;* but a "pair of mustachios," as they were called, was never seen, save on a cavalry officer, a dancing-master, or a "snob," and the cultivation of a beard was wholly confined to foreigners.* In those days it was no uncommon sight, on looking up at the cry of "Sweep!" to see a sooty imp protruding from a chimney-pot, and waving his brush. This was the veritable "climbing-boy," who was popularly supposed to be the slave of a tyrannical master, whose ascent of a difficult chimney was said to be hastened by the burning straw in the

Why shave?

Chimney-sweeps.

* In 1850, when Albert Smith had just returned from his Nile trip and his month at Constantinople, with a flowing beard, he was a candidate for the Garrick Club. It was unofficially notified to him from the committee that his beard was most objectionable. A. S. distinctly refused to be terrorised into shaving, but declared he would have no objection to modify the hirsute adornment after his election. The "beard movement," as it was called, by which we got rid of the imperative necessity for the appalling razor, did not take place until after the Crimean War. It was immensely assisted by an article in *Household Words*, entitled "Why Shave?"

grate beneath; who wore a brass plate, with his master's name and address, on the front of his cap; who danced in the streets on May Day in company with Jack-in-the-Green, "my lord," and the girl who rattled the ladle as a suggestion for donations; and who—the little sooty imp—was, in all our childish minds, the hero of the story in which the tired-out little sweep lay down on the bed in Montagu House, and being found there, was recognised as the child who had been stolen thence some years previously.

Changes in London streets.

What a change in the aspect of the streets of London since those days! Gone is the colonnade over the shops in the Quadrant, which extended from the County Fire Office to Glasshouse Street, which was taken down, partly to give more light to the shop-keepers, but mainly at the pertinacious insistance of one of them, a stationer named Dolby, who denounced the covered way as affording a retreat for "dissolute persons." Poor "dissolute persons," ever hunted into the hard cold streets! Gone is the Rookery, a conglomeration of slums and alleys in the heart of St. Giles's, a resort of really desperate characters, which was pulled down and smashed up when New Oxford Street was made. Before that, all the vehicular traffic, and every pedestrian who did not care to run the risk of being mobbed and hustled, turned off to the right on reaching the commencement of Totten-

ham Court Road, where stands Meux's Brewery, and, making a considerable *détour*, passing St. Giles's Church, and through Broad Street, Bloomsbury, came out into Holborn just by the top of Drury Lane. That was the regular north-western route to the City when I first went there in '47, and now it is almost a desert. Gone are Holborn Hill, and Snow Hill, and Skinner Street, the mountain-pass of the great Farringdon range, done away with by the great engineering triumph of the Holborn Viaduct. The L.C.C. or London Conveyance Company, which owned many omnibuses in those days, used to have a man stationed at the top of Holborn Hill to jerk the skid under the wheels of the omnibuses, and another at the bottom to jerk it off; and in bad weather these poor wretches were scarcely recognisable as human beings from their incrustations of mud. On Snow Hill was the Saracen's Head, where Mr. Squeers used to put up.

The Farringdon range and mountain-pass.

Gone is Smithfield, with its very wide open pens and cattle-hutches; and gone with it is a good deal of the scandal of driving the wretched beasts through the streets, and whacking and torturing them in the most dreadful fashion. Enormous hordes of cattle for Smithfield Monday market, then—not as now, sent up by rail, but driven long and tedious journeys—used to arrive at Highgate on the Saturday, and pass the Sunday in the fields let out for the

purpose. Gone is Cranbourn Alley, the home of the bonnet-makers, and Leicester Square such as I first
Ichabod! remember it—a howling wilderness, with broken railings, a receptacle for dead cats and every kind of abomination; then covered over by the hideous building for Mr. Wyld's great Globe; and lastly in its present pretty and cheerful condition. Gone is pleasant Brompton, transformed into South Kensington, and now absorbing dear Old Brompton, with its broad acres of market-garden, its green lanes, pretty cottages, and general rurality. And gone, too, is a bevy of terraces and streets and places, rejoicing in the generic name of "Upper Eaton," and situate between Grosvenor Place and the Victoria Station. The magnificent Grosvenor Gardens stand on the site which they occupied—cheery homes of the St. George's medical students, always redolent of pipes and beer.

When I had achieved the age of nine it was considered that I had sufficiently drained the Pierian spring, as supplied by Mrs. Kieckhöfer, and that I should be removed to some establishment where a better quality of the article was on tap. My father had a strong wish that my ultimate destination should be Holy Orders, and that I should at once go to his old school, Charterhouse, and thence to Oxford. But there were many difficulties of various kinds against taking even the first step in that direction;

and, after some discussion, it was decided that I should be sent to Sir Roger Cholmeley's Foundation School at Highgate, now known as Highgate School, an endowed foundation of Elizabeth's reign, which, after a long unacknowledged existence, was beginning to prosper under its newly-appointed headmaster, the Reverend John Bradley Dyné, of Wadham College, Oxford. It was, of course, a "day school," and, though boarders were received at one or two of the masters' houses, it was arranged that I should go to live with some friends of Mrs. Kieckhöfer, resident in Highgate, who had just fallen into financial trouble, and who proposed thus to increase their means.

I go to Highgate School.

They were singularly nice people—I will call them Stone—and exceptionally unfitted for the duties which they had taken upon themselves. It was all very well when I was their only boarder; and, being constantly either at school or in the playing-fields with their eldest son, a lad of my own age, I made little difference in their arrangements. But when their ambition increased, and they took more boarders, and removed from their pretty little villa to a huge ramshackle house in the village, in which they had only a little oasis of decent furniture and appointments in a desert of schoolroom and playroom, and bare floors and forms and tressel deal tables, where they could seldom escape from the perpetual noise

Where I "board."

and racket and discomfort of a dozen strong, hot, sturdy boys, with all the selfishness, insensibility, and obstinacy which characterise the race, they must have thought their money hardly earned indeed. Mrs. Stone was a charming little woman, fairly young, pretty, accomplished, ladylike; she used to work like a slave, and we scoundrel boys used to tyrannise over her like Turks, find out her weak points—which were, of course, her children—and attack her through them, worry her life almost out of her, and she never repined.

I am not sure that, with all her gentle kindness, she was as much liked by most of the boys as her husband; I know that with me he was the greater favourite. This was because, even with the difference in our ages, we had many tastes in common: he often said I was more like him in my ideas than his own son, who was a studious, practical, earnest fellow, and who now holds one of the most important commercial positions in London. Mr. Stone was a bit of a Bohemian and a great character; and I suppose, even in those days, character study had a fascination for me. He was a young man still—only a little over thirty, I should say; but we never could clearly make out what had been his previous career. He never actually said it, but he certainly insinuated that he had been a cavalry officer, in some regiment of Dragoon Guards, we

A great character.

thought; a sword and sabretache were suspended on the wall of his dressing-room; an *Army List* and a handsome book of coloured plates of the uniforms of the different regiments were among his treasures; and he had a habit of throwing himself into a fencing attitude, and delivering himself of a "pass" with his stick at any post or tree we might meet with. And yet my firm belief is that he had not the faintest connection with the army, but had been a clerk to his father, who had failed as a banker. But, for an eager enthusiastic boy, he was the most delightful of friends. He was the bright side of Micawber, the constant anticipation of something good about to "turn up;" he was full of good stories—not merely anecdotes and jokes, though he had a supply of those, but long dramatic stories, which he told admirably. He was a believer in ghosts, about which he had innumerable legends. Best of all, he was the first who told me of Walter Scott and Dickens, lending me the treasured volumes, and sometimes reading out whole scenes of *Pickwick*, interrupting himself with his convulsions of hearty laughter.

When I was within a fortnight of my eleventh birthday, I experienced my first genuine grief—the death of my father. I do not know whether he was constitutionally consumptive—there were stories that he had been internally injured by an elephant which had been exhibited in some piece at the Adelphi, and

into whose den he had rashly ventured; but the fact remains that, some five years previously, while playing *Robert Macaire*, he had broken a blood-vessel. He was so ill that his life was despaired of; and even on his convalescence he was warned that he ought never to act again. Such a warning to such a man was, of course, absurd; his natural energy, not to say irritability, rendered it impossible to abide by any rules he might prescribe for himself; and, moreover, his means of existence depended on his exertions. He resumed the exercise of his profession as soon as he thought he could do so with comparative safety.

In the winter of '41-42, while playing at the Adelphi in *Agnes St. Aubyn*, he again ruptured a vessel, but recovered sufficiently to play till the end of the season. Immediately at its close, on the night before Passion Week, my father and mother, with Wright, Paul Bedford, and one or two more of the company, started to play an engagement in Dublin. My father suffered considerably during the voyage, but rallied on reaching the shore. On the Saturday before Easter Sunday he was rehearsing Lord Skindeep in Jerrold's *Bubbles of the Day*, when he suddenly felt ill, and, putting his handkerchief to his mouth, found he had ruptured another vessel, and was spitting blood. With great presence of mind, he avoided giving any alarm to my mother, who was on the stage at the time; but merely saying, "Bess, I shall

My father's last illness.

go away now," turned and went off to Morrison's Hotel, where they were staying. There he lay for some weeks, incapable of being moved, attended by the famous physician, Sir Philip Crampton; a certain Dr. Joy, afterwards well known in London as a factotum of Mr. Charles Kean's; and an apothecary, whose name escapes me, but of whom, to show "the ruling passion strong in death," I tell this anecdote. "The ruling passion."

The apothecary was a very strange-looking person, with odd features, peculiar hair, an enormous white neckcloth, and a singular way of carrying his cane. Now, the mobility of my father's features, and his power of reproducing facially as well as vocally the persons whom he imitated, was a frequent theme among his admirers. He had evidently, illness notwithstanding, been much struck by the appearance of his medical attendant, and one day, when my mother and Dr. Joy—I have heard the story from both—were coming into the room, he asked them to wait a moment. When he called, they entered, and found him sitting up in bed: he had arranged his hair, twisted his face, put on a towel for a cravat, got hold of a stick, and sat there the living image of the man he intended to represent.

The illness was evidently very serious this time, and it was decided, as soon as he was sufficiently strong to bear the journey, to get him to London, where he could be under the care of his old friend

Dr. Billing and his brother, Dr. Yates, both of whom were well acquainted with his constitution and idiosyncrasy. The well-known tragedian, Mr. Macready, was acting in Dublin at the time, and sent my mother the following note, which I give in proof, despite of too many recorded instances of temper, egotism, and vanity, of his real goodness of heart and kindly feeling:

"Gresham's Hotel, June 8, 1842.

Mr. Macready's letter.

My dear Madam,—I will make no apology for intruding this hurried note upon you, as it will bear its own excuse with it. Let me, in as few words as possible, assure you of my deep sympathy in your late anxieties, and offer you my congratulations on the progress towards recovery which Mr. Yates has made, to whom I beg you will present my continued wishes for his perfect restoration. Having heard that you purpose setting out for London to-night, I have thought it only right to apprise you of the necessity there is, if Mr. Yates travels in one of the railway carriage *beds*, to provide yourself in Liverpool with a very soft feather-bed *to lay upon the cushions of the common carriage-bed*, and also additional soft pillows. I know, from several night journeys, that the shaking of the carriage is *felt much more* in the recumbent than in the sitting posture, unless well eased by additional cushioning. There will be no difficulty in arranging this, and, well guarded in this respect, I have no doubt he will be able to reach London without inconvenience.—With my best wishes accompanying your journey, I am, dear madam, very faithfully yours, W. C. MACREADY."

They arrived in London on Friday, the 10th June, and my father was first taken to the Euston Hotel; but the noise and bustle being too much for him, he was removed to a furnished house, No. 4 Mornington

Crescent, Hampstead Road, in the immediate neighbourhood. There he lay for ten days, with my mother and my aunt, Miss Yates, in constant attendance on him. On the tenth day my aunt, seeing my mother breaking down with fatigue, urged my father to use his authority in getting her to forego her watch, and get some rest. "Let her give me one more day," he said; "I won't ask for any more!" and the next day, at twenty minutes past three P.M., he passed away, perfectly sensible, and, with his last breath, blessing his wife, and commending her to the care of those who loved him. My father's death.

He was buried on the following Sunday morning in the vaults of the parish church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. I can see the ceremony now, with myself as chief mourner, and my kind uncle, Dr. Yates; Mr. Gladstane, my father's partner in the Adelphi; my godfather, Frederick Hodgson; and Charles Manby, my father's executor and my guardian, who only died at the end of July this year (1884): on the steps of the church were some of the Adelphi company—Wilkinson and Lyon, a well-known character, John Saunders, and some of the old servants of the theatre. So he left us: only forty-five, full of energy and enthusiasm, and just beginning to shake himself free from pecuniary trammels, and to take his proper position in that art of which he was so decided an ornament. His funeral.

Extracts from the obituary notices of the journals

of the day are before me, and in them I find willing tribute to his genius. "It may be truly said," says the *Standard*, "that Yates was one of the most versatile performers on the stage, which may, perhaps, account for his having had no decided *forte*. In tragedy, comedy, farce, and melodrama he was occasionally capital, and always respectable. His extraordinary talent as a manager has been universally acknowledged, and his loss will be severely felt by the playgoers of the metropolis. The command he possessed over the audience has been frequently exemplified; by one word addressed in his peculiar way he could quiet the most uproarious gallery, and secure the goodwill of his hearers under the most embarrassing circumstances."* The *Morning Herald* says: "As an actor, he exhibited wonderful versatility. At the Adelphi, he played whatever was wanted in the pieces produced; that is to say, not the best parts in the piece, but the parts he found it most difficult to get portrayed." The

Newspaper comments

* There is a good story told of my father in connection with his power of quelling uproar among the audience. One night a tremendous row occurred at the end of the first act of a new piece. Loud cries for "Yates" brought my father on to the stage. "What is all this?" he asked peremptorily. Unintelligible yells and shouts from all parts of the house. "Look here!" said my father, on the first approach to silence, shaking his finger menacingly at the audience generally, "if there is any more of this disturbance, *you shall have your orders back!*"

Sunday Times, recalling his early days at Covent Garden, says: "He played Frenchmen, Jews, Scotchmen; tragedy, comedy, farce; old men and walking gentlemen; and obtained the sobriquet of 'Kill Devil.' What nobody else would act was sent to Yates." The *Times* "regrets exceedingly to announce the demise of this most popular performer and manager;" and the *Morning Post* gives a long biography and laudatory notice of his labours.

His character.

My father was a man of extraordinary irritability, partly natural, partly induced by having to deal with such preternaturally stupid people as the lowest class of actors, the "supers," are found to be. I have seen him at rehearsal standing on a bench in the pit, and thence directing the movements of a crowd or a procession or some congregation of "supers" on the stage. "No, no! that's not a bit like it! Don't you hear what I say? When Mr. Lyon says, 'Behold your king!' you—" Then came instructions in detail. "Now, try again!" This would happen over and over again, until at last he would send his hat flying amongst them, and descend from his bench quivering with rage. But to his friends, male and female, he had many lovable qualities: he was an immense favourite with the public, and the grief at his death was very widespread. As to my mother, all thought the shock of her husband's loss would have killed her.

To her dying day, eighteen years after, she cherished his memory, and kept the anniversary of his death in solitude and prayer.

Resting. Immediately after the funeral, my mother removed to a furnished house in Grove Terrace, Kentish Town, which she had taken for a few months, where the sweet air and perfect quiet—for in those days Kentish Town was a very pretty suburb, surrounded by broad fields, and permeated by the fresh air from Highgate and Hampstead—did her much good, and where I joined her in my midsummer holidays, then close at hand. Suddenly stricken down, my father had left his affairs in some confusion, and it was not known whether my mother would have sufficient income to enable her to retire wholly from the stage, a profession which she had always detested, and which had become more hateful to her since her husband's death, an event which she imagined, rightly or wrongly, had been hastened by his pursuance of it. Meanwhile she and my godmother, Miss Fernyhough, a maiden lady of good Gloucestershire family, who had long had great affection for her and my father, and who proved herself a true friend, decided upon keeping house together. A very pretty villa with a huge garden was taken in the New Road running from Hammersmith to Shepherd's Bush, and there they remained for some time.

That Hammersmith house was the scene of a

very funny incident, which impressed itself on my youthful mind. Hoping never to have to return to the hated theatre, and desirous of banishing as much as possible all memory of it, my mother desired me never, in any intercourse with the new servants, to refer to the Adelphi, or to hint at what had been my father's calling. Of course I obeyed, and we imagined our former state was wholly unknown to the household. But one day, as I was standing in the garden, watching the factotum man-servant at work, he looked up and said, "Lord, sir, how you do remind me of your pa!" I was very much taken aback, and asked him if he had ever seen my father. "Seen him? Bless you!" he cried, in tones of genuine admiration, "shall I ever forget him as Robsperry at the Adelphi?" Then I ran off, and narrated what had happened to my mother, who, in the midst of her dismay, could not help smiling as she told me that Thomas had probably referred to a piece founded on certain incidents of the French Revolution, in which my father had played Robespierre. "Robsperry."

I may here state that my mother's hope of quitting the stage was not destined to be fulfilled just then. The Adelphi property was sold to Mr. Benjamin Webster, the lessee of the Haymarket Theatre, who placed Madame Celeste at its head, and engaged an excellent company, in which my mother took a prominent position.

I look back to the six years which I passed at the Highgate School with very little pleasure. The head-master, Dr. Dyne, was a capable pedagogue enough, not more than usually narrow-minded, priggish, and conventional. He was a type of the old-fashioned pedantic school, which looked upon Oxford as the "hub of the universe," thought the study of Latin and Greek the primary object of our creation, despised modern languages and foreign countries, and believed thoroughly in the virtues of corporal punishment. A desperate "swisher" the doctor, as I had cause to know, and not overburdened, to my thinking, with tact, judgment, or impartiality. He never liked me, and there was no particular reason why he should, for I had the theatrical taint; I was not a show-boy; I was not going to the university, where I could reflect credit on my teaching; and I was idle, mischievous, independent.

An old-fashioned pedagogue

I must have learned something, for I was at the head of the fifth form when I left, at fifteen years of age; but I do not suppose what I acquired did me much good. I could read, construe, and parse the principal Latin and Greek poets—I am sure I could not do so now—but of English classics I was wholly ignorant: they formed no portion of the "curriculum." The study of modern language, though not absolutely tabooed, was minimised as much as possible. I do not imagine that the head-

My studies.

master or any of his assistants had ever crossed the Channel, or knew a syllable even of French, for which language their contempt was as great as Mr. Lillyvick's. The learning of French and German was an "extra" not supposed to be in the least necessary to an ordinary education, but to be paid for separately, and to be undergone by the boys, whose foolish parents insisted on their acquiring it, at times when the rest of the school was at play. A snuff-taking old French gentleman came once a week, and sat at the end of a table, while a dozen boys fought round it, larked, and shot paper pellets into his frizzy hair. He had no authority, poor old fellow, and there was no one to keep order; the whole thing was a farce; and had I not had a natural inclination for French study, and an interest in my *Télémaque* and my *Henriade* sufficient to induce me to read them in my play-hours and my holidays—interest such as I never could feel in my Homer, Virgil, or Herodotus—I should have left Highgate as ignorant of modern language as did most of my compeers. But though I got little good from it, it is not to be denied that Highgate School, under Dr. Dyne's management, was very successful. Its pupils took scholarships and exhibitions, and good positions later on in the class-lists; and the tone of the school, which under the doctor's predecessors had suffered terribly, was entirely restored by him: a greater feat, it will be

allowed, than the quintupling the number of pupils, which Dr. Dyne also accomplished during his *régime*.

My schoolfellows.

I think I was tolerably popular among my schoolfellows. I was in the first eleven at cricket, and, being tall and strong, was a tolerable performer at football and hockey. The two elder sons of Mr. Bethell, Q.C., afterwards Lord Westbury and Lord Chancellor—Richard, who succeeded his father, and is dead, and Slingsby, who is reading-clerk in the House of Lords—were at Highgate, where their father then lived, and both were friends of mine. On Richard Bethell's dun-coloured pony I had my first experience of equitation. Mr. Bethell had been acquainted with our head-master since their college-days. They were both Wadham men, and we boys were much interested in the career of the great lawyer, and hunted for his name in the newspaper reports of the courts. I can see him now, in his pew in the church, which directly fronted ours, bald-headed, with well-cut features and a general air of distinction, and I can hear the mincing tones, "Rich-ard, my dee-ah!' in which I often heard him address his son.

Closer in my intimacy was Thomas Keith, now Accountant of the India Office, whose father and uncle at that time held good positions in its forerunner, the old East India House in Leadenhall Street. My friend's uncle, the elder of the brothers, who was for a long time the head of his office, had in his early days

been a fellow-clerk with Charles Lamb, of whom he would tell good stories. I remember also his showing me a book which had been given him by Lamb, with a very Lamb-like inscription. It was a *Table of Interest*, and on the fly-leaf was written, "William Thomas Keith, from Charles Lamb. In this book, unlike most others, the farther you progress the more the interest increases." Charles Lamb's book.

More intimate still, my close chum, such as every schoolboy worth anything must have, was Theodore Emilius Gahagan, of an Irish family well known in Anglo-Indian military life. A bright charming fellow, very clever, with a real appreciation of the ludicrous, and wonderfully funny himself, a capital draughtsman, a clever caricaturist, with a knack of verse-writing and an early inclination to literature. He and I were inseparable at school and in the holidays. When we left Highgate—we entered and left the school on the same day—he went to Addiscombe, then the military training-school for the H.E.I.C.S., whence, taking the highest honours, he passed into the Engineers. He was wounded in the Burmese War of 1852, and died some years afterwards in India of dysentery. T. E. Gahagan.

Other schoolfellows and friends of mine at Highgate were G. H. Tod-Heatly, well known in London society; Charles Marshall Griffith, Q.C.; Thomas Waraker, LL.D. of Cambridge; J. Cotter Morrison; Other schoolfellows.

B. B. Rogers, the translator of Aristophanes; Richard Goodhall Smith, formerly Librarian of the Middle Temple; and Colonel J. F. D. Donnelly, of the South Kensington Museum. Philip Worsley, known for his admirable translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, was also at Highgate, but immediately after my time.

Our yearly examinations were conducted by Dr. Russell, who had been my father's head-master at Charterhouse; and our prizes were distributed on speech-day by the Bishop of London—not the present Bishop, who was at that time incumbent of Muswell Hill, a neighbouring parish, but the great Charles James Blomfield, a fine handsome man, whom I recollect seeing in the pulpit, shorn indeed of his episcopal wig, for those monstrosities had just been given up, but decked out by an enormous pair of lawn sleeves. The Duke of St. Albans, who lived then on Highgate Hill, at Holly Lodge, now occupied by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, was another speech-day visitor, and an unfailing sleeper during the greater portion of the entertainment.

Prize-day.

At this period of my life the important question of what I was to do in the way of earning my living had been pretty well left to take care of itself. My mother's income, independent of her profession, was lamentably small. It was her greatest wish, and mine too, that she should retire as soon as possible from the stage, where, no longer a young woman nor

a manager's wife, she found her position each year less tolerable; and it was plainly impossible for her to make me the allowance necessary for my maintenance at college, even if I had had the smallest inclination to go there. The idea of the Church had not been mooted for years; but I think my mother would have been very pleased could she have seen her way to insure my proper preparation for the Bar. This, however, even if it had not involved a University career, would have been impossible. Prudent friends, who knew the narrowness of our means, wisely insisted that I ought, instead of spending money, to be put to earning it as soon as possible, and that efforts should be made to obtain for me a nomination to a Government clerkship—appointments which in those happy days went, like kissing, by favour, and needed no superlative talent to win them from a struggling host of competitors. But I was only fifteen, full young to think of being settled for life, and sixteen was the lowest age at which one could enter the Government service; so, to my great delight, my mother determined that I should at once leave Highgate, and have a year's instruction in German and French, to be acquired in their respective countries. Her wisdom was approved by the friends whom she consulted, and in the summer of '46 I bade farewell to Highgate School.

What will become of me?

Some friends of ours had connections residing,

for economy's sake, at Düsseldorf, a pleasant town on the Lower Rhine, from whom we had information of a certain Herr Holthausen, a professor in the Gymnasium—it must be remembered that a German Gymnasium is a place of mental, and not muscular, exercise—who was willing to receive an English pupil into his house. I rather shied when I heard of the school, as I had decided that my term of pupilage, so far as going to school was concerned, was over. I represented warmly to my mother that the one object of my going to Germany was to learn the language, and that there would be but little chance of my doing that if I were to take my share in the ordinary curriculum of a large public school; and if that were expected, I had better have remained at Highgate. Finally, it was arranged that I was to have nothing to do with the school, only to be a private pupil of the Professor's, resident in his house.

To go to Germany.

My mother had determined upon accompanying me to Düsseldorf, as nothing would have induced her to part with me without seeing the place where, and the people with whom, I was to be left. So she and her maid and I started off together. It was not my dear one's first experience of foreign lands. She had frequently been to Paris—which in those *diligence* days meant seeing a great deal more of France and French life than we do now in our five hours' whirl from Boulogne—and she and my father, snatching

We start.

a brief holiday, had once made a rapid tour of the Rhine. I do not know whether Mr. Murray's famous handbooks were extant in those days, but I well remember my mother's telling me of the assistance and comfort they had obtained from the hints given in a volume, either in MS. or privately printed, by a young man who had recently been over the ground, and who was the son of some intimate friends—"young Martin Tupper," the venerable Proverbial Philosopher of later times.

En voyage.

We travelled slowly, for we had no occasion for haste, and my mother rejoiced in my delight at the novelty and the freedom from scholastic restriction. We stopped first at Dover, shunning the stately Ship, notorious for its immense charges, and going to an hotel (then just established), the Dover Castle, which still exists; crossing to Ostend, where we remained a day or two; on to Verviers for a night; and then to Cologne, where we put up at a second-rate but capital inn in the middle of the town, to which we had been recommended, the Brüsseler Hof—it has been long since done away with—where no one spoke English or French, and where we had to endeavour to explain our requirements by pantomimic signs. I must have traversed that ground nearly thirty times since, but the incidents of that first journey are fresher in my mind than those of last year's trip. The thick white cups and saucers; the inevitable and

omnipresent, from Petersburg to Paris, "mossoo" smell; the blue-bloused men, the bonnetless women, the shovel-hatted priests, the rope-girdled friars—even now, when first seen again, invariably recall to my mind the little Hôtel de Flandre at Ostend, where I first found myself "abroad."

At Düsseldorf.

I look back upon my time at Düsseldorf with the same affectionate regret with which Tennyson's Cleopatra regarded her "life in Egypt," although "the dalliance and the wit, the flattery and the strife," which she apostrophised, were but small factors in my German career. The chief cause of my happiness was that I was, for the first time in my life, my own master, fearing no dominie, unaccountable to any authority; I had cast the schoolboy shackles,

> "and began
> To move about the house with joy,
> And with the certain step of man."

I was only fifteen, it is true; but I was a tall stalwart youth, looking much older, and most of my ways and thoughts were those of a young man of twenty. I was the dear old Professor's only private pupil, and as most of his time was passed at the Gymnasium, and what he called his leisure found him in a gray *Schlafrock*, with a pipe hanging from his mouth, engaged in some very abstruse reading, I had pretty well my time to myself.

At first the Professor made some attempt at

giving me regular lessons; but he was compelled to admit the soundness of a theory which I propounded—that, as I had come there to pick up the language, my best chance of accomplishing my end was by going about as much as possible, thrown entirely on my own resources. This suited the Professor perfectly, and thenceforth I had perfect liberty. I soon made innumerable acquaintances of all kinds, with whom I soon quickly managed to make myself understood; and having a quick ear, I made rapid progress. I avoided the "Plattdeutsch" of the lower classes, I picked up artistic slang among the painters, oaths and free expressions from the officers, and plenty of small-talk from everybody. As I have said, there and then commenced my manhood; from that time, and for five-and-twenty years afterwards, I had no friends who were not considerably my seniors. My time at Düsseldorf was absolutely and entirely my own. I might be absent from meals whenever I chose—and I think Madame Holthausen rather preferred my absence, for economical reasons, for in those days, like Launcelot Gobbo, I was "a huge feeder"—and I carried about with me the key of the street-door, a huge and cumbrous piece of ironmongery.

How I learned German.

Düsseldorf was then—what it had been for years, and what it is now perhaps more than ever—renowned as one of the most famous of the Conti-

nental art-schools. It was the abode of hundreds of painters of all kinds—real true Bohemians, such as were drawn by Murger and sung by Béranger, poor, jolly, improvident, careless, delightful fellows; the most fascinating company in the world for a lad with youth and health, and the keenest possible appreciation of the delights of existence, then commencing to dawn upon him. I was kindly received and welcomed among them all — by Lessing, one of the finest artists of modern days, our next-door neighbour in the Grüne-Strasse; by Karl Hübner, by Andreas and Oswald Achenbach, now world-renowned, then young fellows with whom I have skated all day and half the night; by Camphausen, the German Landseer; and by fifty others, unkempt, unwashed, never likely to win any renown, very poorly dressed, very warm-hearted, ever ready to share their *viertel* of Varinas tobacco with a friend; ever ready to knock off work, and go round to the nearest *Kneipe* for a grand consummation and many glasses of beer.

The artists.

After years of Dr. Dyne and "I will now take the fifth form with their Euripides;" after tight-reining and regular hours; after having to hide behind a haystack to smoke a penny cigar, with constant anticipation of being caught and swished, I revelled in my newly-acquired freedom, in my manhood (precocious though it were), and in the knowledge that I had put away childish things. And, even if I would have admitted

Freedom.

it, there was no occasion why my conscience should have pricked me; for all this time I was carrying out the object with which I was sent, and acquiring an excellent conversational knowledge of the language. When I first left Düsseldorf, and for some years after, having had only nine months' experience, I doubt whether there were many English people who could speak German with equal felicity of expression and purity of accent. Constantly in Germany I passed for a native; and even now, though years of want of practice have rusted my tongue and dulled my ears, after a week or two in the *Rheingegend* my old facility seems in a measure to return. I could write the language, too, fairly, though my style could not have been called strictly commercial, as the demands upon it were in quite another strain; and those demands having long since ceased, the power of correspondence has entirely vanished. Progress.

Düsseldorf—which has now, I believe, a considerable English colony—was at that time but little known to our countrymen; but even then there were three or four resident families, from whom I received the greatest kindness. There was Captain Flint—quaintest and most eccentric of half-pay artillerymen, the source of constant wonder, not unmixed with dread, to the simple Germans, who called him "der toller Englander" (the mad Englishman), and was looked on in open-mouthed astonishment when, with English settlers.

a battered straw hat on his head and a linen jacket on his back, he would carry a chair into the middle of the public Platz, and there sit down and peruse an ancient copy of the *Times;* or stroll along the Castanien Allée, chucking every passing girl under the chin with his shaking hand, leering at her with bloodshot eyes, and grunting his admiration in some unknown tongue—for having only been in the place twenty years he could not, of course, speak the language. He had a daughter, a bright cheery little woman, who taught English in several families, and more than half supported the household by her exertions; and a son, a kind good fellow—half-Bohemian, half-sportsman, whole idler—with whom I used to go out wild-duck shooting. There was a charming English family named Lindo—a father and mother, two daughters, and a son Philip, an artist, my great chum, in whose *atelier* I used to spend half my time, and with whom I used to ride in the afternoon—for my indulgent mother allowed me the use of a horse.

Perhaps of them all I was most constantly associated with the family of a retired captain in the navy, an Irish gentleman of good birth, with a hospitable wife, two stalwart sons, and a remarkably pretty and charming daughter-in-law. One of the hearty laughs which memory can even now evoke is in connection with these worthy people. I was to spend the whole of Christmas Day in their company, and we were to

have the conventional beef and pudding for dinner—mainly, I believe, out of kindness to me; for the day, I think, is not much of a festival among the Irish of the north. We had all been to service in the Lutheran church, which was occasionally lent to us, listening to the ministrations of a nomadic divine who had pitched his tent among us for a few days, and who ostentatiously exhibited a soup-plate with a napkin, on which lay a thaler and a half as a decoy at the church-door; and when we reached home the house was tightly closed, and no knocking or ringing could procure admission. At length, when the police were about to be sent for, the door was opened by the cook, red-faced and agitated, who announced that thieves had been in the house during our absence, and that everything was stolen. There was nothing very comic in this, especially to a very hungry youth; but the joke lay in the facial and verbal expressions of dear old Mrs. Trotter, who, it must be premised, knew very little German, and to whom the excited servant (doubtless the culprit) addressed herself, with the words, "O madame, madame, ein Dieb ist in's Haus gewesen!" (A thief has been in the house!) "Ah!" said the old lady slowly, and smiling; then, turning to us—"A *Dieb!* And hwat's a *Dieb?*" When she was told, the explosion was terrific.

No Christmas dinner.

There were some half-dozen Americans living at Düsseldorf at that time, among whom I remember a

American settlers.

very handsome couple named Woodville, the husband a painter, and father of Mr. R. Caton Woodville, who contributes such spirited sketches to our illustrated journals, and who has made a great mark with more ambitious work; and a strange fellow named Fink, who had lived a long time among the Indians, and who at the Schwimm-Schule on the Rhine—made by railing off a portion of the river—showed us some extraordinary feats in diving and remaining under water.

Shooting—we got large red-legged partridges, hares, and wild-duck in abundance—riding; skating under the pleasantest circumstances, under a bright sun or moon, and on the firmest and most unyielding ice; and lounging and chaffing at the *ateliers* of painter-comrades, I managed to most agreeably while away the day; and at night there were occasionally informal receptions at the houses of English or German friends, and always the *Kneipe*. Come in with me and look at the curious scene—at least, as much of it as you can distinguish through the tobacco-smoke up-curling from every mouth: it is as fresh in my mind as it was in my sight more than five-and-thirty years ago.

The *Kneipe*.

A room, long, low, and dingy, with tables running down the centre and sides; wooden settles, and other furniture of the commonest description; undecorated, save by chalk caricatures of the mem-

bers, some by themselves and by each other, and admirably portraying the peculiarities of all. Listen to the awful noise—the shouting, screeching, joking, blaspheming uproar, that begins with sunset, and with many ends not until drunkenness has taken away the possibility of further altercation. Their fun is mostly of a quiet, decorous, and, truth to tell, somewhat dull and heavy kind, though it sometimes breaks out into ribaldry and riot. The life is quite amusing while you are leading it, while you are going through the regular routine of it; but when you have left it for a time—when the spell, whatever it may have been, is broken—you look back with astonishment to think you could have ever passed through such a phase of existence. There was a good deal of childish nonsense indulged in among us, and a tendency to practical joking, one example of which still lives in my memory.

A practical joke.

We had all been sitting one evening—singing, shouting, chaffing, according to our wont—when the president of the night noticed that one of the company had fallen into a deep and drunken sleep, his head reclining on his arms, which were crossed upon the table. He immediately proposed this as a favourable opportunity for trying the strength of mind on which Eckhardt, the sleeper, so much prided himself. He told us to go on with our different occupations. Some were to talk, some to play dominoes, some

billiards; others were to be drinking together. Meanwhile, he would extinguish the lamps; but we were all to continue our amusements as though the room were still lighted, and, if called upon, to declare that such was the case. He then turned out the lamps, and, by a sharp kick, awakened the drunken man. The clamour, the smoke, the shouting, in which this wretched being had closed his eyes, all greeted him on his arrival; one thing alone, the light, was absent; and he commenced to attack us for having left him in the dark.

"What the deuce are you at," he asked, "to be sitting here in the darkness of Hades?"

"Ah, bah!" said the president. "Sleep off thy drunken fits, Franz, and leave us alone. Come, Kraus, there's a cannon!" and a sharp stroke on the billiard-balls rang through the room.

"Bravo!" shouted another of the conspirators. "Point, quinte et quatorze! The game's mine!" and the cards, thrown exultingly into the air, fell with a crash upon the table.

"Stop!" cried the wretched Eckhardt, "one moment, stop! Why have you thus darkened the room?"

"Thou art drunk!" roared another. "'Tis thou art dark, and not the room. The room is as light as day! Here, Schimmel-Hase, thou hast not the double-six? Then I am out!" and he rattled the dominoes as he spoke.

"What!" shrieked the victim, in a yell of agony never to be forgotten, "say you the room is lighted, and you are all playing, while I cannot see you? O Almighty God, I am struck blind!"

He fell down in a heap across the table, and it was weeks before he fully recovered.

Meanwhile, though I was, like Mr. Gray's young Eton friends, "unmindful of my doom," with no thought of anything to come, and no care at all, my dear mother was seeing what interest she could exert in order to obtain for me a Government appointment; and finding my father's old friend, the Marquis of Clanricarde, had joined Lord John Russell's recently-formed Ministry as Postmaster-General, she ventured on writing to him, reminding him of old Adelphi days, and asking his assistance. Lord Clanricarde replied instantly, speaking in the warmest terms of my father, and of his desire to befriend us. At the immediate moment he could do nothing, but a considerable increase was about to be made to the strength of the Secretary's office, the best in respect of pay and position in the Post Office, and he would certainly not forget my mother's application when the proper time arrived. I am afraid my mother was a little sceptical as to a patron's memory; but Lord Clanricarde was as good as—nay, better than—his word. A few months afterwards he sent for my

Lord Clanricarde's kindness.

mother, and asked for more particulars concerning me, my age, education, &c. When he heard I was not yet sixteen, he shook his head, fearing I should be too young for a berth "on the establishment" such as he had purposed for me, but in any case he promised to make me an "extra" clerk. He thought it better I should return home at once, and come with my mother to see him.

I begin life in earnest.

So, summoned to return at once, I left Düsseldorf and its delights, and arrived in London, going the next day with my mother to call on Lord Clanricarde in Carlton House Terrace. I see him now, as at that first interview, a tall, thin, aristocratic man, bald and bland, wearing—novelties in my unaccustomed eyes—tight pantaloons, striped silk socks, and pumps. He received us most kindly, took my hand, saying—as every one used to say—"How wonderfully like your father!" and, after a little chat, turned to my mother with his pleasant smile, and said, "It will be all right, Mrs. Yates; the boy is so big and strong, no one will guess he is not sixteen, so we'll put him on the establishment at once." Not by very many the only time that my thews and sinews have stood me in good account, but perhaps the most important. A week later I received my appointment as No. 8 in a list of thirteen clerks added to the establishment of the Secretary's office, St. Martin's-le-Grand.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DAYS IN THE POST OFFICE.

1847—1855.

I ENTERED the Post Office service on the 11th March 1847, and remained in it exactly twenty-five years. I was not quite sixteen when I received my appointment, and I was nearly forty-one when I resigned it; so that I suppose the best years of my life were passed in the Government employ. Looking at what has happened since, I feel that I might very possibly have employed this time far more profitably. There were several occasions on which, had I chosen to give up the small certainty, I could have obtained valuable literary and journalistic appointments, the holding of which was incompatible with my daily attendance at St. Martin's-le-Grand. The double work was heavy, and not unfrequently harassing. On the other hand, the routine of a public office, in which certain things have necessarily to be done at certain stated times, gave me business habits and appreciation of the necessity of punctuality, which have been of great value to me in my other career.

Small, but certain.

I am by no means sure that the change in the work, from the dry official records of facts to the

light essay or fanciful *feuilleton*, did not enable me to get through more work than if all the hours of labour had been devoted to one kind of subject. And I am quite sure that, though the pay was small, and the work not particularly congenial; though I was generally poor and always anxious; though my health was not very good, and my cares were perpetually increasing, I extracted as much happiness out of my position as was possible—more, probably, than I could have found in most other stations in life, where the responsibility would have been greater. I grumbled at my lot, as we all do; but I know that I never returned from my annual holiday without a half-pleasurable sensation at being back. My animal spirits were excellent. I was, I am pleased to think, very popular with most of my comrades; and the authorities, if not entirely in sympathy with some of my eccentricities, were, on the whole, indulgent, and inclined not to see anything that was not specially brought under their notice. In my earliest official days, I formed one or two intimate friendships, which exist to the present hour, having never known a shadow. And generally in the course of every two or three months I find my way to St. Martin's—not, however, to the building in which my time was passed; that has been given up entirely to those engaged in letter-sorting, &c.—and have a chat with old colleagues over old times.

Happy days at St. Martin's.

A superstitious person might possibly have thought it an unfavourable omen for my future career that the pole of the omnibus on which I journeyed into the City broke as we were descending what in those days was a very steep hill between Hatton Garden and Farringdon Street, and that we nearly were upset; but one is not superstitious at sixteen, and I was only a little nervous when I presented myself at the lobby of the Secretary's office. My godfather, Edmund Byng, had mentioned my appointment to two young fellows of his acquaintance who were in the office, and they speedily introduced themselves to me and set me at my ease. There was no examination in those days; I had not even to write from dictation, or do a rule-of-three sum, as had Anthony Trollope thirteen years before.

My first appearance.

After a few days' probation in the Registry, where the receipt and disposal of the various communications addressed to the department were recorded in huge ledgers, I was placed in the money-order department of the Secretary's office—*i.e.* where the correspondence relating to money-orders with the public and the postmasters was carried on; and there I remained about two years. Two years of almost unalloyed official happiness! We were about twelve or fifteen clerks altogether, dispersed in three or four rooms. Our principal was a bald-headed middle-aged man, given to taking snuff and imbibing a cheap

Marsala—a man full of strange oaths without any modern instances, but of a kindly nature, and disposed to make allowance for youth. There were three or four fellows not much older than myself, and we were always telling the most ridiculous stories and playing the wildest pranks. Our room had a door of communication with that of the Chief Clerk, an old gentleman who had the reputation of being a little thick and cloudy after luncheon. One day some of the fellows, while larking, upset a huge screen, which fell with a resounding bang. I had had nothing to do with it, but was advancing to pick up the screen, when the Chief Clerk entered, flushed with lunch and rage. "What the devil's this row?" he called out; then, seeing me—he had scarcely ever noticed me before—he graciously said, "O, it's you, is it, sir? Please recollect you're not now on the boards of the Adelphi!" Again the old reproach of the schooldays cropping up! It seemed as if it were never to be got rid of!

The Chief Clerk.

I am sure, from all I hear, that the young gentlemen by whom the Secretary's office is now junior-officered, and who are mostly, I believe, graduates of the Universities or scions of the aristocracy, would scarcely believe the details of the audacious fun which used to be perpetrated by their predecessors just before the year 1850, so I will relate one or two special instances.

No fun now.

My great chum in those days was a man about ten years older than myself, whom, for distinction's sake, I will call Pitt, and who was the most audacious practical joker I have ever met. He had the most charming manners and the most perfect *sang-froid;* nothing ever upset his balance, and he could perpetrate the most daring hoax without altering a muscle of his face. Two of his exploits I remember well. At the corner of one of the streets running from the Strand to the river, near St. Mary's Church, was a well-known Italian warehouse. One day, as Pitt and I were walking westward after office-hours, we saw hanging at the shop-door a bundle of bananas, with an inscription, "The last bananas we shall receive this season." Pitt stopped and read the placard. "That is very curious," he said, "and must be inquired into!" I followed him up the shop, a long low addition to the original house, until we reached the counter at the far end, where two or three shopmen were busy serving customers. "Could I speak to Mr. ——?" asked Pitt, mentioning the name he had read on the shop-door, and speaking with the greatest earnestness. "He's in, sir, but he's having his tea; but if you particularly want him, I'll call him." "Thank you, I *do* want a word with him." The proprietor came out of his parlour, wiping his mouth, and, rounding the counter, was immediately laid hold of by Pitt, who took him by the elbow and led

A practical joker.

The bananas.

him, astonished, to the door. Arrived there, Pitt pointed to the bananas. "Are these positively the very last bananas that you will receive this season?" "Yes," said the man, "they are. What of it?" "Is there no probability, then, of your having another batch?" "No—not that I know of. What of it?" said the man, with a dawning suspicion of being hoaxed, but still impressed by Pitt's excellent manner. "What of it? Well, *I* think it a most interesting circumstance! Deeply obliged to you. Good-morning!" And he took off his hat with an air, and left the man, purple and speechless, on his own threshold.

Another of his practical jokes was even more audacious. Middle-aged readers will possibly remember that the original shop for Holloway's patent medicines was at the extremity of the Strand, a few doors west of Temple Bar. It was a long shop, with a narrow counter running the length of it, at which sat a number of men, occupied in rolling the pills, spreading the ointment, &c. Pitt had often told me he felt curiously attracted to that shop; and one day, as we were passing, he said, "Can you keep grave for five minutes?" I told him I thought I could, little guessing to what test my gravity was to be subjected. "Then come along!" And the next minute he sprang from my side into the shop, where, in the open space before the counter, he began leap-

A wonderful cure.

ing about and throwing up his legs with an agility which, in those præ-Vokes days, was unknown. The shopmen stared in wonder, and one of them was advancing, when Pitt bounded in front of him, and asked, "You don't know me? you don't recognise me?" The shopman, evidently taking him for a lunatic, was muttering something about not having the pleasure, when Pitt, pointing to the others, asked, "Do none of those recognise me?" A general chorus of "No!" "I don't wonder at it!" said Pitt. "When I was last in this shop, I was carried in on the cab-man's back—couldn't walk a step—bad legs of forty years' standing! But now, thanks to your invaluable pills and ointment—look here! and here!" Once more he bounded and danced up and down the shop —and then we ran for our lives.

It was my prominent share in the perpetration of these jokes that first procured me the honour of an interview with Mr.—afterwards Sir Rowland—Hill, who was most kind and friendly with me so long as he lived. Our first meeting, however, scarcely boded well for the future. There had been a tremendous row, not unconnected with the peppering, with peas and pellets of saturated blotting-paper, of the passers-by in Foster Lane, a thoroughfare on which our windows looked; and I, who had been caught by one of the authorities in the very act, had been "reported." "Reported."

Rowland Hill was then in a transition state: he Rowland Hill.

had carried out his penny-postage scheme, and received some of his rewards; but he had many bitter, powerful, and unscrupulous enemies, who had succeeded in having him removed from a berth at the Treasury, to which he had been appointed, on the plea that his services were no longer required. There had, however, been a loud expression of public feeling; Mr. Hill had been presented with a testimonial, raised by public subscription, and amounting to nearly fourteen thousand pounds; and in the year before I joined the service he had been pitchforked into the department in a somewhat anomalous position. He was not made Secretary of the Post Office—that important berth had been for years held by Colonel Maberly; Mr. Hill was called Secretary to the Postmaster-General, a ridiculous title for a sham and non-existent position. The Post Office had its Secretary, the Postmaster-General had his private secretary, and no other was required. But it was necessary to find a berth at St. Martin's-le-Grand for Mr. Hill, and he did not of course care what it was called, provided he got recognised status and sufficient salary. His duties were arranged, so far as possible, not to clash with Colonel Maberly, who was exceedingly jealous of the new arrival, and hated "the man from Birmingham," as he always called him, with a holy hatred. Mr. Hill, with two or three clerks, prepared statistical returns, suggested economies, and also had the supervision of

that secretarial money-order department in which I worked. So that when, one morning, I was told "Mr. 'Ill" wished to speak to me, I felt as I had not felt since Dr. Dyne's invitation to his sanctum at Highgate School.

I found him seated at his desk, a middle-aged man of medium height and slight build, bald-headed, with deep-set gray eyes, wearing spectacles, and with a grave, but not unkind, expression. After exchanging bows, he commenced by saying that my name had been mentioned to him by his old friend Charles Manby, who was, he believed, my guardian. I admitted the fact, and began to think I was getting on pretty well, not having been summarily dismissed, as I had half anticipated. "I have been making some inquiries about you, Mr. Yates," he continued, "and I find you're very popular, and have plenty of energy and ability, and can do very good work if you choose, but that you suffer under a superfluity of animal spirits." He stopped, and looked at me keenly through his glasses, while I muttered something about "not being aware of it." "So I'm told," he said, "and I'm going to ask you one or two questions. Where do you live?" "With my mother, sir, in St. John's Wood—the Alpha Road." "Ah," said he, "a very nice part, though a little too far away. Now, how do you come down to the Office?" "Generally on the top of the omnibus, sir." "Ah, I

A cure for excessive animal spirits.

thought so. Now, if in future you would *walk* down to the Office, Mr. Yates, I think you'll find it would bring those animal spirits to a proper level." And I bowed myself out, too delighted at having escaped so easily.

I am afraid that I never followed my chief's well-meant advice, but to the end of my career persisted in riding down to the Office. In later days, and in the summer, I would come on horseback through the parks, and, putting up my horse in Westminster, would go on into the City by boat. These, however, were my omnibus days. On the morning journey the vehicle was completely filled by "regulars," *i.e.* passengers who invariably occupied the same seat, which they retained by a weekly payment. My place was next the driver, Jack Harris, a wonderfully humorous fellow, whose queer views of the world and real native wit afforded me the greatest amusement. A dozen of the best omnibus sketches in *Punch* were founded on scenes which had occurred with this fellow, and which I described to John Leech, whose usually grave face would light up as he listened, and who would reproduce them with inimitable fun.

My omnibus.

I only had one other interview with Mr. Hill in those early days, though in later official life I was constantly in personal communication with him. It was the custom in those days—which were, I suppose, before the invention of copying-machines—to copy

into various enormous books every official document, whether minute to the Postmaster-General, instructions to the officers of the staff, or letter, and even simple acknowledgment of receipt of their communication to the public. The duty devolved on the juniors, who took it in turn to remain after the close of the official hours, ten till four, and discharge it. One day, I not merely copied a letter which had been written at Mr. Hill's instance, but, having rather an imitative pen, I succeeded in producing a very fair copy of his signature at its close. Some time after, I was again summoned into his presence. "Is that your copying?" asked Mr. Hill, pointing to the letter. I acknowledged it. "And is that also your work?" with his finger on the signature. With cheeks aflame I bowed in acquiescence. "It's very clever," he said, "very clever indeed; but don't you think," he added quite quietly—"don't you think, Mr. Yates, *it's rather a dangerous accomplishment?*" He emphasised his words with a keen glance through his spectacles, and I have never copied a signature since.

A dangerous accomplishment.

At the end of two years I was transferred to another branch of the Secretary's office, and placed under the care of John Strange Baker, to whom I owe my business training, my love for English literature, and many of the happiest hours of my life. It was a critical period with me just then; for though during my schooldays I had imbibed a taste for

John Strange Baker.

reading in a small way, the fact of becoming my own master, and the introduction to the grosser pleasures of London life, had almost extinguished it, and I was degenerating into rather a rowdy *farceur*, a senseless, sensuous, funny-story-telling, practical-joke-playing kind of cub, when I was rescued by my official apprenticeship to John Baker.

What he taught me.

I knew my Byron, and Moore, and Scott tolerably well, but very little of Wordsworth, and had never heard the name of Tennyson. With my new friend I made acquaintance with Macaulay as a prose-writer ("The Lays of Ancient Rome" had been favourite spouting-pieces at Highgate), and after the Essays went through the *History of England*, then just in course of publication. Goldsmith, Boswell, Lamb, De Quincey, Coleridge, and Hazlitt are all associated in my mind with those days, whence also I date my first real appreciation of the worth of Shakespeare, though I had lived in a world of Shakespearean appreciation and quotation from my childhood. My friend, who happily still survives as one of the principals at St. Martin's-le-Grand, was an admirable master of official style, and had the power of marshalling his facts and expressing himself in concise sentences, which must have been specially grateful to our chief, Colonel Maberly, who abhorred what he called "slip-slop." Gifted with a large stock of patience and toleration; gentle, kindly,

full of fun himself, and with a keen appreciation of humour; an excellent official guide and a charming private friend, he was essentially a man to obtain influence over a youth of my earnest eager temperament, an influence which was always wholesomely and beneficially exercised.

Of very different calibre in mind and body and brain was another companion of those days, James Kenney, the eldest son of Kenney the dramatist —a strange weird little man, with bright eyes and shaven cheeks and stubbly black hair, looking something between an actor and an abbé. There was, however, considerably more of the actor than the abbé about him. He had lived much in France, his mother was a Frenchwoman, and he spoke with a strong foreign accent, in which he would give forth the funniest stories, the quaintest sayings, which for a long time impressed us deeply with his talent and wit, until we discovered that stories, sayings, the very tones in which they were narrated and the gestures with which he embellished them, were borrowed bodily from his younger brother, Charles Lamb Kenney, who achieved some distinction with his pen, and as an oral wit was amongst the first flight. James posed as a scientific and mechanical genius, and always carried about with him a black bag in which he had portions of a brass machine, which he would take out during the pauses

James Kenney.

of the official work and commence to scrape, hammer, and file at, sending us into paroxysms of teeth-on-edge discomfort. He had an actual substratum of cleverness, but it was wholly unavailable in a public office, and his life was frittered away without his making any mark.

Colonel Maberly.

In my new position I saw, for the first time, the virtual head of my office, the Secretary, Colonel Maberly,* and was frequently brought into communication with him so long as he remained with us. I cannot understand how Anthony Trollope, as he narrates in his *Autobiography*, found Colonel Maberly cruel and unjust; he may have had a personal dislike to Trollope, whose manner, I fear, was not conciliating; but though he was always pleasant to me after a fashion, his chief characteristic was, I think, indifference. He liked his status at the Post Office, he liked the salary which it gave him, he was fond of money, and he went through the work; but he was an Irish landlord—a very different position then from what it is now; and his mind was running on whether Tim Mooney would pay his rent, or Mick Reilly the bailiff would get a good price for the heifer. He was married to a beautiful and brilliant lady, who wrote

* The Postmaster-General is, of course, the real head of the Post Office, but to most of the clerks he is a veiled Mokanna; besides, Postmaster-Generals "come and go" with Ministers, while the Secretary, until death or resignation releases him, "goes on for ever."

fashionable novels and went into society, so he had much besides the Post Office to occupy his thoughts.

His peculiarities.

He used to arrive about eleven o'clock, and announce his arrival by tearing at the bell for his breakfast. This bell brought the head messenger, whose services he arrogated to himself, who, being a venerable-looking and eminently respectable personage, probably well-to-do in the world, was disgusted at having to kneel at the Colonel's feet, and receive the Colonel's dirty boots into his arms with the short adjuration, "Now, Francis, my straps!" He wrote a most extraordinary illegible hand, and perhaps for that reason scarcely any holograph beyond his signature is to be found in the official records. The custom was for certain clerks of recognised status, who had a distinct portion of the official work in their charge, to submit the reports which had been received from the postmasters or district surveyors, on complaints or suggestions of the public, to the Secretary, and receive his instructions as to the course to be pursued, or the style of reply to be sent. This performance we used to call "taking in papers to the Colonel," and a very curious performance it was.

How he transacted business.

The Colonel, a big, heavily-built, elderly man, would sit in a big chair, with his handkerchief over his knees and two or three private letters before

him. Into a closely-neighbouring seat the clerk would drop, placing his array of official documents on the table. Greetings exchanged, the Colonel, reading his private letters, would dig his elbow into the clerk's ribs, saying, "Well, my good fellow, what have you got there—very important papers, eh?" "I don't know, sir; some of them are, perhaps—" "Yes, yes, my good fellow; no doubt *you* think they're very important: *I* call them damned twopenny-ha'penny! Now, read, my good fellow, read!" Thus adjured, the clerk would commence reading aloud one of his documents. The Colonel, still half engaged with his private correspondence, would hear enough to make him keep up a running commentary of disparaging grunts, "Pooh! stuff! upon my soul!" &c. Then, the clerk, having come to the end of the manuscript, would stop, waiting for orders; and there would ensue a dead silence, broken by the Colonel, who, having finished his private letters, would look up and say, "Well, my good fellow, well?" "That's all, sir." "And quite enough too. Go on to the next!" "But what shall I say to this applicant, sir?" "Say to him? Tell him to go and be damned, my good fellow!" and on our own reading of those instructions we had very frequently to act.

With all this, Colonel Maberly was a clear-headed man of business; old-fashioned, inclined to let matters run in their ordinary groove, detesting all projects of

reform, and having an abiding horror of Rowland Hill. As I have said, he was with me generally easily good-natured, but he could assume an air of *hauteur* and be uncommonly unpleasant sometimes; and I remember that when on a little slip of written memoranda which used to be kept on the edge of his green slope-desk we saw the words, "Kate—money," we might generally expect to find the Colonel's temper rather short that morning. Storm-warnings.

Amongst those clerks who were not brought much into communication with him he was supposed to be very high and haughty, and in connection with this *trait* there was a good story told of him shortly after I joined the service. It appears that one of Lord Clanricarde's recent appointments, a strapping Irish lad fresh from Galway, wished to effect an exchange of duties with a brother clerk named Williams, whose exact whereabouts he did not know. He roamed through the unfamiliar passages until he met a young fellow, of whom he inquired where Williams was to be found. The young fellow was a practical humourist, and, at once comprehending the situation, pointed to the door of the Secretary's room and disappeared. In went the neophyte without an instant's hesitation, and found the Colonel writing at his desk. "Is it Williams ye are?" asked the Galwegian. "Eh?" cried the astonished Colonel, raising his head. "Are ye Williams, and will ye take me waithin' duty—" But "Are ye Williams?"

here the outraged Colonel flung down his pen, and, waving off the intruder with both arms, called in a hollow voice, "Go away, man!"

The Postmaster-Generalship being one of those berths which are vacated on a change of Ministry, my kind friend Lord Clanricarde did not remain very long in office. While at the head of affairs, he took several opportunities of showing that he had not forgotten me. He had me sent out to assist one of the district surveyors in his travels of inspection round the country offices, a duty which, as it provided "per diem" and travelling allowances in addition to the salary, and gave one the chance of becoming acquainted with much of the internal working of the department, was, in every way, a really good thing for a young man. I am afraid, however, that, just launching, as I was, into the pleasures of London life, I scarcely appreciated his kindness as I ought; and I know that when, later on, I was occasionally sent out to "take charge" of a country post-office—*i.e.* to represent the postmaster, who, through some dereliction of duty, had been temporarily suspended from exercising his functions—I used to groan in spirit at my exile from all I loved, though, of course, I could make no open demonstration. The ghastly days and nights I have passed in such places as Stony Stratford and Sittingbourne, with a dull mechanical duty to perform, and without a congenial soul with

Assisting the surveyor.

whom to exchange an idea, are still present to my memory.

A year after I first entered the service, I was sent to Winchfield, a desolate railway-station on the S.W.R., near Basingstoke, where it had been decided to open a post-office for the convenience of the Speaker, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who lived in the neighbourhood, and other local magnates. I was selected to instruct in his duties the young man who had been appointed postmaster; and, while I was inculcating the very small amount of official lore which I myself possessed, the news came of the intended Chartist demonstration on the 10th of April 1848. I was not going to be left out of such a chance of excitement; so I rushed up to London for a couple of days, got myself sworn in as a special constable for Marylebone, mustered with my division at what used to be Captain Hall's riding-school, at the top of Albany Street, and then turned out to enjoy the fun of the streets on my own account.

Deserting my post.

Lord Clanricarde's kindness continued while he lived, though we only met occasionally; he always wrote to me when anything special in regard to me had occurred; and on my quitting the service in 1872, I thought it right to acquaint him with the fact, and at the same time to thank him for his early kindness. His reply was in the most genial spirit. "I assure you," he wrote, "I feel very sensibly your kind recol-

Lord Clanricarde's kindness.

23577

lection. It must enhance the pleasure I have often felt and feel in observing your distinguished and well-deserved success in literature, gained while you did not fail to earn official credit likewise. That I have been at any time able to serve you, and to gratify your excellent and admirable mother, will always be to me a happy reminiscence."

After the retirement of Lord Clanricarde, the holders of the Postmaster-Generalship, in my time, were Lords Colchester, Elgin, and Canning; the Duke of Argyll; Lords Hardwicke and Stanley of Alderley; the Duke of Montrose; and the Marquis of Hartington. Save in some special instances, the general body of the clerks knew little about their Great Panjandrum. On his accession to office, he used to be "brought round;" that is to say, Colonel Maberly would open the door of each room and say, "Gentlemen, the Postmaster-General!" then, turning to his lordship, "This is the such-and-such branch;" and we would rise and bow, and our new master would return the salutation and depart.

Introducing the P.M.G.

This was the usual style of performance; but I remember two exceptional cases, in both of which the late Lord Hardwicke was concerned. He was a blunt, eccentric, mannerless person, with an overweening sense of the importance of his position; he had previously served in the navy, which fact, coupled with the peculiarity of his ways, caused him to be known among

us as "the Bo'sun." His first genial inquiry on his appointment, when the "list of officers of the department" was submitted to him, was, "Now, can I dismiss all these men?" And his general idea was that late attendance, or any other shortcoming on the part of the clerks, should be punished by keel-hauling or the "cat." On the occasion of his being "brought round," it happened that a couple of dozen of Guinness's bottled stout—a pleasant beverage, which at that time I was sufficiently young and strong to take with my luncheon—had arrived for my consumption, and had been temporarily stowed away in a corner of the room. As the Bo'sun was about retiring the bottles caught his eye. "Hullo!" he roared, in a Jack Bunsby-like voice; "whose are those?" I meekly acknowledged the proprietorship. I do not know what punishment Lord Hardwicke would have decreed me for the inexpiable offence of drinking beer, for Colonel Maberly hurried him away. In the next room they were not so fortunate. There one of the men was so absorbed in his *Times* that he had not heard the entrance of the Secretary and the new chief, but, with his back to the door, sat immersed in his reading. The wily Bo'sun marked this at once, and, stealing up behind the preoccupied man, gave him a dig in the ribs, exclaiming, "Hullo, you sir, if you can find time to read the newspaper, we can spare a clerk!"

"The Bo'sun."

With only one other of the Postmasters-General—Lord Stanley of Alderley—was I ever brought into contact, though towards the close of my official career I was treated with kindness and consideration by Lord Hartington, at a time when I required both. I had not, nor have I, any personal acquaintance with Lord Hartington, but I desire to place on record my appreciation of his friendliness. Lord Hartington has, I believe, a character for *hauteur* and want of sympathy; but his interest in the service and his impartiality won him great respect in the Post Office; whereas his predecessor, Lord Stanley of Alderley, known as a *bon-vivant* and a joker, "old Ben Stanley" among his friends, was heartily detested by most of the officials whose ill-luck it was to have to see him. That he was cross-grained and tyrannical, and stingy to the letter-carriers and messengers, I knew from his treatment of official matters; that he was insolent and overbearing to his subordinates I had heard, but little thought I should ever have any personal experience of the fact.

Lord Hartington.

A tyrannical old gentleman

One day, however, I was sent for by Sir Rowland Hill. I was at that time the head of the Missing Letter branch, and as such it had devolved on me to carry out a pet scheme of Sir Rowland's—the reduction of the fee for registering letters from sixpence to fourpence, by which it was hoped that, as the opportunities for obtaining almost certain security

were made cheaper, the chance enclosure of coins and valuables would be proportionately diminished. The measure had taken many months' close attention to elaborate, but at last it had been worked out in every detail, had received the sanction of the Treasury, and only required the Postmaster-General's signature to a certain deed to become law. This deed had been prepared and forwarded to Lord Stanley, and we were awaiting its return. Obeying his summons, I found my chief rather anxious.

"I am afraid I have rather a disagreeable job for you, Yates!" was his salutation. A disagreeable job.

"Indeed, sir?"

"Ye—es. In connection with the registration-fee. The papers are with the Postmaster-General, are they not? I've just been told by the solicitor, Mr. Ashurst, that it is absolutely necessary his lordship's signature should be attached to the warrant before twelve o'clock to-night, or the whole thing will lapse as informal, and all our trouble will be lost. It will be necessary, therefore, that some one should see his lordship at once, explain the matter to him, and get his signature. Now you are the only person in the office who understands all about the question, and therefore you must go."

"Very well, sir. Can you tell me where I am likely to find Lord Stanley?"

"Yes; that's just the point. I understand that

Lord Stanley is at Newmarket Races, with—with rather a fast party of friends. You'll have to go to him there."

This was horrible. To have to drag an irritable elderly nobleman away from his fun—bother him about business!

"Dear me, sir," I said, "that is a disagreeable job, indeed!"

"Yes," he said; adding instantly in his peculiar hard manner, "but you'll have to do it. I don't exactly remember the name of the house or hotel where Lord Stanley is staying, but you'll get that from his confidential butler in Dover Street. So be off as quickly as you can, and be sure to get the signature before midnight. Here is a letter of introduction for you to present to Lord Stanley, in which I have told him who you are. Good-day!"

Sir Rowland nodded me my dismissal, and, though I detested the mission, there was nothing for me to do but to go. I drove off in a cab to Dover Street, was admitted by a footman, saw the confidential butler, and learned from him that Lord Stanley had just arrived from Newmarket, and was at that moment actually in the library. I gave the man Sir Rowland's letter of introduction, and in a few moments was bidden to follow him.

The confidential butler.

I can see that room and the scene which occurred

perfectly, plainly, at the present moment. Standing on the hearthrug, with his back to the fireplace, and facing me as I entered, was a thickset elderly man of middle height. On the table close by him was a yellow paper-covered French novel which he had evidently just thrown down, and on a further table were three or four of the heavy leather pouches in which official documents were forwarded to the Postmaster-General. "Old Ben Stanley."

As the butler closed the door behind me, I made the gentleman a bow, of which he took not the smallest notice. He did not offer me a seat, so I remained standing, *planté-là*.

"What do you want?" was his gracious query.

"I have come about the reduction of the registration-fee, my lord. I thought Sir Rowland Hill had explained in his letter. It is necessary that your lordship's signature—"

"Yes, yes, I know all about that," he interrupted. "I have signed the damned thing!" going to one of the official pouches, and rummaging in it. "It's here somewhere—no, that's not it. I can't find it; but I know I've signed it. Look here, have you got a cab outside?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then," pointing to them, "just take these pouches back to the Office; you'll find it when you get there."

It was just too much. I am of a hot temper, and I boiled over.

The turning of the worm.

"What!" I cried, in a tone that made my friend jump again. "What! do you expect me to carry those bags to the cab? If you want that done, ring the bell and tell your servant to do it. I'm not your servant, and I won't carry bags for you or any man in London!"

He looked petrified; but he rang the bell.

"What's your name, sir?" he asked.

"My name is Yates, my lord," I replied.

"I don't like your manner, sir," said he.

"And I don't like yours, my lord," I rattled out. "I came here, properly introduced by the Secretary; I made you a salutation, which you had not the politeness to return; you have never asked me to take a seat—"

"Wasn't I standing myself?" he interpolated.

"That is no affair of mine. Your business as a gentleman was to ask me to be seated. And now you think I am going to do your servant's work!"

Here the servant entered the room, and was ordered by his master to carry off the bags. I was preparing to follow him, when Lord Stanley said,

"You shall hear more of this, sir!"

I show fight.

"Whenever you please, my lord; I shall be quite ready!" and off I went.

I was desperately upset, and I suppose I showed

it; for when I arrived at the Office I made straight for Sir Rowland's room. His face, on seeing me, expressed more astonishment and concern than I had ever seen there.

"What, back so soon!" he said. "Why, what's the matter with you, my good fellow? You're trembling, and—tell me, what has happened?"

I told him shortly. The old gentleman was greatly excited, and very sympathetic. He rose from his seat, and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"I'm very sorry you've been exposed to this, Yates," he said; "but you mustn't mind. He's a damned rude fellow; he's been very rude to *me* before now. Don't you be afraid of his threats; I'll take care of that. And he will think better of what he said when he's a little cooler. Depend upon it, you'll hear no more of it." Sir Rowland's sympathy.

I did not hear any more of it in the way I anticipated. But the story got wind, and another one was speedily improvised to the effect that Lord Stanley had been so frightened by my display of independence that the next time one of the messengers was sent to him with some official papers, he rushed at the astonished man, seized him warmly by the hand, and insisted on his stopping to luncheon. Good for the messenger

To my being able to converse in French and German I owed, during my life in the Post Office,

several delightful special trips—one to Hamburg, to ascertain how quickly the mails could be conveyed thither by a certain route; one to Brindisi, when, in consequence of the outbreak of the Franco-German War, and the consequent danger of continuing our Indian mail service from Marseilles, I had the honour of pioneering the route over the Brenner, and thence to Brindisi, which was followed until the completion of the Mont Cenis tunnel. My first special journey, however—first and most important—was merely due to my position in the Secretary's office. It was in the year 1858, and the terrible Indian Mutiny was at its height. Submarine telegraphy was in its infancy then, and the number of letters passing between this country and India was so enormously increased that supplementary mails were continually being despatched. The ordinary Indian mail, made up in air-tight cases, was always sent in charge of special officers appointed for the purpose, and discharging no other duty than that of travelling, with the mails in their custody, from London to Marseilles, and from Marseilles, on board one of the steamers of the P. and O. Company, to Alexandria, where the charge was transferred to the officers of the Indian Post Office, who had travelled so far, bringing the homeward letters. No mails were despatched without an officer in charge; so during the Mutiny the supplementary mails were sent in care of some of

"In charge."

us junior clerks of the Secretary's office, who were delighted to get the chance of the change.

As soon as I heard when my turn was likely to come, I wrote to Anthony Trollope—who had been sent out to Egypt on a special mission from the General Post Office—telling him I was coming, and asking him to look out for me. I started from the London Bridge Station of the South-Eastern Railway (there was no Charing Cross Station in those days) one wild night in the beginning of March 1858, with seventy-six boxes or cases of letters in my care. These boxes were counted at Dover, counted on board the boat, counted again on landing at Calais—I in a mortal fright on each occasion—and counted at the *gare* of Calais, where they were deposited in a huge *fourgon*, one end of which was fitted up like a little room, with shelves, a lamp, and two huge *fauteuils*—one for me, M. le Courrier Anglais (for such designation I at once received), and the other for my *confrère*, M. le Courrier Français, by whom I was joined; such a pleasant fellow, I remember, and such a *raconteur!* As we started he put himself bodily—legs, feet, and all—into an enormous bag lined with sheepskin, which he looped round his neck, lit a pipe, flung himself on the *fauteuil*, and began to talk.

The journey.

The two *courriers.*

I can still smell the *saucisson de Lyon* and the *fromage de Brie*, still taste the sound red wine, which

his wife brought him at the *Gare du Nord* in Paris, just before we rattled over the stones with our boxes to the Marseilles railway, and which he generously shared with me; thereby, I verily believe, saving my life, as I was famished, and we had not an instant allowed us to get out and procure food. The weather was bitterly cold throughout the journey; and when we arrived at Marseilles the people were thronging the streets, looking at the thickly-falling snow, a sight which had not been seen for years. I bade adieu to my travelling companion, and got my boxes

On board.

safely on board the P. and O. steamer Euxine, commanded by one of the best and noblest fellows that ever breathed, Captain Thomas Black, with whom I then and there commenced an intimate friendship, which lasted for twenty years, and was only terminated by his death in 1879.

The voyage.

That delightful trip will always remain vividly impressed on my memory, for in it not merely did I see scenes and places which I had longed to visit, but I enjoyed, for the first time for several years, a sense of perfect rest and repose, a freedom from the receipt of letters and calls upon my time. I can perfectly call to mind at the present moment the keen sense of enjoyment in lying outstretched on the deck in the lovely weather, my first realisation of Tennyson's "blue unclouded," with the knowledge that there was no need to hurry to the Office, no accursed "attend-

ance-book" to sign, no theatre to visit, no subsequent criticism to write. We had twelve hours for coaling at Malta, which I spent with a former colleague, the Postmaster-General of the island, through whom I had the honour of an introduction to Admiral Lord Lyons, father of the present diplomatist, who was then in command of the Mediterranean Squadron, and whose personal appearance struck me as so remarkably resembling the pictures of Nelson, whom he so worthily emulated; and, after a further delightful voyage of three days, arrived at Alexandria, where I made over my troublesome charge of mail-boxes to the agent, and found I had two or three days at my disposal before the homeward mails were likely to arrive.

Lord Lyons.

I had expected to find Anthony Trollope here, but the following characteristic letter was handed to me:

"Alexandria, 11 March 1858.

Trollope's letter.

My dear Yates,—It is matter of great regret to me that I should miss you. But were I to stay now I should lose my only opportunity of going to Jerusalem. I had hoped to have got there and back before you came out, and it has been impossible for me to start till to-day. I shall probably still see you on 22nd. At Cairo see (above all) the newly-opened catacombs of Sakhara—by taking a horse and mounted guide you may see that and the Pyramids of Ghizeh in one day. Hear the howling dervishes of Cairo at one on Friday. They howl but once a week. Go to the citadel of Cairo, and mosque of Sultan Hassan. See, also, the tombs of the Caliphs. Heliopolis is a humbug, so also is the petrified forest. At

Alexandria see the new Greek church they have just excavated. Go to the Oriental Hotel at Alexandria, and Shepherd's at Cairo.—Yours ever, ANTHONY TROLLOPE."

The mail-agent warned me that my time in the East was likely to be very short; so, on his advice, after a cursory glance at Alexandria, I hurried off by rail to Cairo. The journey, which, I see, is now performed in five or six hours, then took the whole day; and we were even an extra time in getting through it, as in those days, there being only one line of rails, our train was shunted at Tantah to enable a train containing the Pasha's troops to pass by.

To Cairo.

An Egyptian fair.

But the time there employed was not wasted; for a fair was going on at Tantah, in which I found a strange epitome of Egyptian life, even to the incident of the Bedouin bringing in his horse for sale, as related in Mrs. Norton's charming verse. The Bedouin in this instance, however, seemed to be a remarkably 'cute customer, not unversed in the mysteries of "coping" and "chaunting," and with altogether more of the London mews than of the Libyan desert about him. There was a Punch, too, and a buffoon who danced, and another who told stories, and was surrounded by a rapt and eager audience, quite a reminiscence of the *Arabian Nights*. At Tantah, too, I saw a band of convicts, horrible-looking ruffians, many of them grievously afflicted with ophthalmia, handcuffed and

Egyptian convicts.

leg-ironed, and linked together by a long chain passing over their shoulders. They growled and cursed freely as they passed us; but the guards in charge prodded them pleasantly with their muskets, and drove them on. There, too, did we find drawn up on the siding three large green saloon-carriages, in which were, we were told, some members of the Pasha's harem. Up and down in front of these vehicles paced some very hideous black slaves—*Arabian Nights* again!—who scowled on any one daring to approach, and motioned the would-be intruders away. But a fellow-passenger and I stole to the back of the carriages, while the Pasha's troop-train was passing in front, and the guardians' attention was thus engaged, and were rewarded for our temerity by a momentary glimpse of a pair of lustrous eyes and a white yashmak.

Lights of the harem.

It was night when we reached Cairo; the station was a long way from the town; and. I made a triumphal entry on a donkey, followed by its driver, and preceded by a boy with a torch, both boys yelling at the top of their voices. I was deposited at the door of Shepherd's Hotel, where my arrival was sufficiently ignominious; for the sudden cessation of the donkey's gallop sent me flying over his head, to the great delight of several of John Company's officers, military and civil, who were congregated in the verandah. Shepherd's was full—I am told it always is, even in its present enlarged and improved form—it was

I arrive at Shepherd's.

crammed that night, and I was about to be turned away. But on my making an emphatic representation to Mr. Shepherd, and mentioning the name of Albert Smith, who had done the hotel good service in his "Month at Constantinople," I was told I might, if I chose, take possession of a large sofa, which stood in a corner of the coffee-room. I was too thankful even for this accommodation; and after a meal I laid myself down without undressing. The room was quite dark, and I had not been long asleep when a man, whom I made out to be a French waiter, and who was rather drunk, plumped himself down by my side. Him I kicked into the middle of the room, and heard no more of; but I was again awakened later by a fresh visitor, in the shape of a huge dog, who had evidently been accustomed to pass the night there, and with whom I shared my couch.

A restless night.

When I woke I found the homeward-bound mails had been telegraphed as having left Suez, so that my visit to Cairo was considerably abbreviated. Of the Pyramids I may say, *vidi tantum:* I actually saw them in the distance from the top of the citadel, and that was all. I rejoined the old Euxine at Alexandria, made my return journey across France much as I had come, and was home in London within three weeks of having quitted it, which in those days was considered good travelling. A couple of articles descriptive of my journey, under the title "In Charge,"

Homeward bound.

appeared in one of the early numbers of *All the Year Round.*

My other official trips had no incidents particularly worthy of record, though in connection with my run to Hamburg and back occurred one of those amenities of official life which it is as well to preserve. The journey, which was undertaken at the express desire of Mr. Frederick Hill, the Assistant Secretary, was made in the month of January, in exceptionally severe and trying weather, the Elbe being frozen over; my instructions being to prove in how little time the out-and-home journey could be accomplished. I took but a very few hours' rest before starting on my return. The consequence was that on my arrival at home I was completely knocked up. I had signs of erysipelas on my forehead, desperate pains and numbness in my head, and a thorough all-overish sense of illness. I got to bed at once, and sent for my old friend Mr. Skey of Bartholomew's, who pronounced me suffering under a complete chill, with serious complications in the future, unless I succumbed at once.

To Hamburg.

Ill.

I was anxious to make my report, and to give personal explanation of the results of my journey; but the doctor insisted on my remaining in bed, and wrote a certificate of my state, which I forwarded to the Office, asking for indulgence for two or three days. I do not know whether the certificate

was couched in professional, and consequently apparently pompous, terms, which grated upon the simple susceptibilities of the Secretary, Mr. Tilley; whether he was annoyed at my having been employed by one of the Hills, with whom he was always at variance; or whether it was the natural benevolence and geniality of the man, which caused him to send me the following reply to my application:

Genial Mr. Tilley.

"Sir,—In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, I have to inform you that, *as it appears you have a headache*, leave of absence for two days has been granted you.—Your obedient servant, JOHN TILLEY."

This was my return for having faithfully performed a service which did not lie within my ordinary duty, and in the discharge of which I had been nearly frozen to death and narrowly escaped rheumatic fever!

But no cynical insults from a Tilley, or any other grim humourist, rankled long in those days of youth and generally good condition, and, despite Rowland Hill's warning, wonderful animal spirits. The luncheon-time alone was fruitful of delights. When I first joined the service the luncheons were procured from neighbouring taverns; but Colonel Maberly's sense of the fitness of things was annoyed by encountering strange persons wandering through the lobbies, balancing tin-covered dishes and bearing foaming pewter-pots. Rumours were current of his

Luncheons.

having been seen waving his arms and "hishing" back a stalwart potman, who, not knowing his adversary, declined to budge. Anyhow, these gentry were refused further admission, and a quarter of an hour —a marvellously elastic quarter of an hour—was allowed us in which to go and procure luncheon at a neighbouring restaurant.

Chop-houses.

There were plenty of these to choose from. For the aristocratic and the well-to-do there was Dolly's Chop House, up a little court out of Newgate Street: a wonderful old room, heavy-panelled, dark, dingy, with a female portrait which we always understood to be "Dolly" on the walls; with a head waiter in a limp white neckcloth, with a pale face and sleek black hair, who on Sundays was a verger at St. Paul's; but with good joints, and steaks and chops and soups served in a heavy old-fashioned manner at a stiff old-fashioned price.

Gratitude "to scale."

Almost equally grand, but conforming more to modern notions, was the Cathedral Hotel at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, where there was a wonderful waiter with a graduated scale of gratitude, on which we were always experimenting and imitating. Thus, for the donation of a penny, he, looking uncomfortable, would mutter, "Thenk, sir;" for twopence he would audibly remark, "Thank *you*, sir;" for threepence he would make a grand bow, and say, "Thank *you*, sir; I'm 'blaiged to you." He never

varied his programme, though we often tried him. Only last year I saw him, very little changed, walking on the esplanade at Worthing, and looking at the sea as though he regarded it rather as a penny customer. At the Cathedral, too, was an old gentleman, a regular *habitué*, who, as I am afraid he was, a Radical, delighted in the perpetration of one mild joke. He would secure the *Morning Herald*, the Tory organ of those days, and when he had perused it would hand the paper to his opposite neighbour with a bow, and the observation, "Would you like to read any lies, sir?"

City refectories.

We impecunious juniors, however, ventured seldom into these expensive establishments. For us there were cheaper refectories, two of which achieved great celebrity in their day: Balls's Alamode Beef House in Butcher Hall Lane — I believe Butcher Hall Lane has disappeared in the City improvements, but it used to run at right angles with Newgate Street, near the eastern end of Christ's Hospital—where was to be obtained a most delicious "portion" of stewed beef done up in a sticky, coagulated, glutinous gravy of surpassing richness; and Williams's Boiled Beef House in the Old Bailey, which was well known throughout London, and where I have often seen the great Old Bailey advocates of those days, Messrs. Clarkson and Bodkin, discussing their "fourpenny plates." Williams's was

a place to be "done" by any one coming up for the London sights; and there were always plenty of country squires and farmers, and occasionally foreigners, to be found there, though the latter did not seem to be much impressed with the excellence of the *cuisine*.

In those days, too, we used to lunch at places which seem entirely to have disappeared. The "Crowley's Alton Alehouse" is not so frequently met with as it was thirty years ago. The "alehouses" were, in fact, small shops fitted with a beer-engine and a counter; they had been established by Mr. Crowley, a brewer of Alton, on finding the difficulty of procuring ordinary public-houses for the sale of his beer; and at them was sold nothing but beer, ham sandwiches, bread and cheese, but all of the very best. They were enormously popular with young men who did not particularly care about hanging round the bars of taverns, and did an enormous trade; but that was in the præ-Spiers & Pond days; and, I am bound to say, all the facilities for obtaining refreshments, and generally speaking the refreshments themselves, have enormously improved since then. There was also another luncheon-house which we used to frequent on Addle Hill—not a bad name for the Doctors' Commons of those days, in which it was situate—and on our way whence we would look in at "the Commons," where the bench, bar, and general arrangement were supplied

"Alton ale-houses."

at that time by a family of the name of Fust—look in with additional interest, aroused by the associations of the place with *David Copperfield*, then in course of publication.

Penny steamboats.

I knew Doctors' Commons, too, as a short cut to the river, by Paul's Chain to Paul's Wharf, and thence by penny steamboat to Hungerford Bridge (long since pulled down and carted off bodily to Clifton by Bristol, where it spans the Avon); by halfpenny steamboat at one time, for in the fury of competition three, the Ant, Bee, and Cricket, were started at that price, but the last-named blew up—it was proved at the inquest that the stoker tied down the safety-valves with strings to increase the speed—at a time when it was loaded with business-men coming into the City; and the news, being received at the Post Office, caused the eager inquiry from one of our rascals, "Any seniors on board?"

It was a somewhat grim jest, but we were like the midshipmen who drank the toast, "A bloody war or a sickly season." We were wretchedly paid, and promotion was desperately slow. When I first entered the service the Post Office was one of the worst paid of the public departments and one of the lowest in rank. There seemed to be a general acceptance of idea that the duties there were entirely confined to sorting letters; and I have often been seriously asked by my friends of the outer world

Popular notions of our work.

whether I had noticed such and such a letter in the course of its transmission. So far as the Secretary's office was concerned, all the letter-sorting, &c., might have been a hundred miles off for what we saw of it; but the public—for as all nations were Gentiles to the Jews, so, to an official, all non-officials are "the public"—the public never seemed to give any heed to the huge amount of ability, patience, experience, and technical knowledge required to insure the prompt and proper transmission of their mails; the postal intercourse with foreign countries and the colonies; the contracts with the great ocean steam-companies; the discipline of the enormous staff with its representatives in every city, town, and village of the United Kingdom; and a hundred other minor details, any friction in the working of which might have thrown a huge portion of the machine out of gear, and caused indescribable confusion amongst the great commercial circles.

Small salaries.

All this work was done in the Secretary's office, the staff of which then numbered about fifty men, all told, who were paid according to the following rate. On entering the service a salary of 90*l.* a year; no increase for three years, when the pay was made 110*l.*; no increase for another three years, when it was raised to 140*l.*; but this involved admission into the body of "clerks in waiting," who took it in turn to sleep at the office, and had to pay for the meals

consumed there without any extra allowance. In this, the "assistant," class the salaries advanced by 10*l.* a year until they reached the sum of 260*l.* a year, where they stopped. So that unless he managed to get, through a death-vacancy, into the senior class, which was limited in number, where the salaries commenced at 350*l.* and advanced to 500*l.*, a man after twenty-five years' service would receive 260*l.* a year, and might never get beyond it. In those days, too, a deduction was made for "superannuation allowance"—that is to say, we were mulcted in a contribution to future pensions, which we might or might not receive. Thus, when I was supposed to be getting 90*l.* a year, my quarterly receipt was 21*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* This cruel tax was afterwards abolished, mainly through the influence of Mr. Disraeli.

It was desperately poor pay, and various efforts had been made to obtain an improved scale, but without effect. *Esprit de corps*, so far as in any way assisting his official inferiors, was wholly lacking in Colonel Maberly's composition. I recollect mentioning, parenthetically, to him once that I had been up nearly all the night in connection with some of the clerks'-in-waiting duties. "Well, my good fellow, you're paid for it!" was his sympathetic remark. Thus the Colonel, having just arrived at eleven o'clock, munching his breakfast in easy comfort—the Colonel with his 1500*l.* a year salary, his

Sympathetic Colonel Maberly.

half-pay, his Irish rents and private fortune—to me, tired out, blind with want of sleep, and passing rich on a hundred and forty pounds a year!

Just about this time—*i.e.* soon after I reached the "assistant" class—the Postmaster-General of Malta died or resigned, and the appointment being in the gift of our Postmaster-General, with a salary of 500*l.* a year, at that time, to me, an income beyond the dreams of avarice, I applied for it. Colonel Maberly good-naturedly agreed to recommend me for the vacant berth, which I believe I should have obtained, when news came that our last petition for a revision of salaries had been favourably received, and that a Treasury commission would be appointed to inquire into our grievances. Nearly lost to England!

This news materially altered my plans. I had already doubted the wisdom of my course in exchanging the delights of London life, even in poverty, for such an existence as Malta could offer, and I determined to hang on and hope for better times. I accordingly waited on the Colonel, and told him I wished to withdraw my application. "What for?" "Because, sir, I hear there is a chance of improvement here. They say that we are to have a Commission of Inquiry." "A commission!" he cried testily. "My good fellow, do you know what a commission is? A commission is an official machine for cutting down salaries!" However, to my own sub- The Commission of Inquiry.

sequent delight, I persisted, my application was withdrawn, and another appointment made to Malta. The commission, consisting of Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Elcho (now Earl Wemyss), and a Treasury official, commenced their labours, which extended over many months, with results startling to us. We got a very much improved scale of pay; what was called, in delightful officialese, "the double Secretariat" was abolished; Colonel Maberly was made an extra Commissioner of Audit, with his existing salary; and Rowland Hill was appointed sole Secretary to the Post Office.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF YOUTH.

1847—1852.

At the time of my joining the Post Office service my mother was living, as she had been for some years previously, at No. 12 Alpha Road, a thoroughfare which, with its extension of Church Street, connects that portion of the Regent's Park lying between Clarence and Hanover Gates with the Edgware Road. I am afraid from what I see that of late years it has somewhat deteriorated, but in those days it was a very pretty place. The houses had large gardens, and the respectability of the locality was unimpeachable, my kind old friend, Mr. Thomas Harrison, Commissioner of Inland Revenue, and the family of the late Mr. Serjeant Bompas being our immediate neighbours. Our house was a cosy and comfortable one, and had nearly an acre of garden, which I need scarcely say has now been built over, but which then, despite the London "smuts," produced a fair crop of flowers, and was always green and pleasant to look upon. The one drawback, so far as I was concerned, was the distance

In the Alpha Road.

from the centre of London and from all places of amusement. There was a good omnibus service to the Post Office, and the ride in the early morning was pleasant enough; but returning home from some festivity late at night, I constantly wished Fate had caused my mother to pitch her tent in some less remote district. For I began to dine out, to go into society, and generally to enjoy myself, almost immediately after my return to the maternal nest, greatly to my mother's amazement, and a little, I fear, to her sorrow, though she was certainly proud of the way in which I was "taken up." The nine or ten months' absence had done wonders. I left her a *gauche* schoolboy; I returned a young man, not encumbered with an excess of bashfulness, with plenty to say for myself, and with a strong determination to get on in the world.

Mr. Edmund Byng.

One of the earliest and most efficient promoters of this desire on my part was my godfather, the Hon. Edmund Byng, of whom I have already made casual mention, then nearly seventy, a bachelor, living at No. 10 Clarges Street, and one of the most eccentric of human beings. He was a very handsome and particularly distinguished-looking old gentleman, with fresh complexion and well-cut features, but suffering greatly from an affection of the eyes, which compelled the wearing of coloured glasses. Until very late in life he never wore

a great-coat, but was always dressed in a dark-blue tail-coat with plain flat gold buttons, brown trousers rather tight, brown gaiters, and shoes. His hat was always a very bad one, and he was never seen in the street without a large gingham umbrella, which he carried horizontally tucked under his arm, and which was always coming into violent contact with animate and inanimate objects. His friends used to say that his defective eyesight never precluded his recognising the difference between a pretty and an ugly woman, and his great predilection for beauty, which had been a feature in his youth, was one of the few disagreeable characteristics of his old age. He was very clever, well read—his knowledge of Shakespeare was extraordinary—a confirmed cynic, with, as is so often the case, a great deal of practical benevolence, but full of that bitter satirical humour which is so captivating to youth, and in which, wholly unchecked and outspoken as it was in my old friend, I used to revel. He was known to all sorts and conditions of men, and delighted in gathering those most likely to be diametrically opposed in their views at his table, and egging them on to argument, which, on occasion, would wax tolerably warm. He had been in his youth very fond of the theatre, and his was one of the very few houses in those days where actors were invited.

His liking for me.

The old gentleman took a great fancy to me,

invited me two or three times a week to his table, where he always placed me opposite to him—a rather trying position for a lad of seventeen, where the guests were nearly all distinguished men—and was always pleased if, after leaving my office, I would call for him, and give him my arm for a tour of visits or card-leaving. He was a somewhat trying companion on such occasions, for his outspokenness and irritability were excessive. I recollect taking him one day to the door of a very great house, and knocking. "Her Grace at home?" asked Mr. Byng. "Her Grace has gone to Chiswick, sir," replied the hall-porter. "What the devil do you mean, sir," burst out the old gentleman, "by telling me your mistress's movements! I don't want to know them! I asked if she were at home, and all I wanted was a plain answer to that question." Then, with a thump of his umbrella on the doorstep, he pulled me away, and we left the man gazing after us, petrified with amazement.

His dinners.

The dinners in Clarges Street were very plain and simple, but very good in their way. Potatoes of extraordinary size and excellence were always served in their "jackets" and in a huge wooden bowl; port and sherry were the only wines; and most of the decanters had their necks filed, the "lip" having been knocked off. The guests varied, but among the most regular were Lord John Fitzroy, a very high-bred looking old gentleman, a great whist-player, and reminding

one altogether of a Thackerayan creation; the late Lord Torrington; John Woodford, of the F.O.; Dr. Dickson, author of *Fallacies of the Faculty;* Mr. Loaden, a smart solicitor in large practice; my colleague, George Harrison; another colleague, Haughton Forrest, a connection of the host; the Hon. and Rev. Fitzroy Stanhope; and John Cooper, the actor. The Earl of Scarborough, Lord Gardner; Horace Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers; Sir William de Bathe; Mr. Norton, the police magistrate; "Billy" Bennett, actor, and father of Miss Julia Bennett; Planché, Charles Dance, and Robert Keeley came occasionally.

"Jim" Macdonald.

There, too, I met for the first time the Hon. "Jim" Macdonald. He arrived, I remember, after we were all seated at table, and this, I suppose, annoyed the old gentleman; for when Colonel Macdonald, as he was then, in his airy manner, said, "How d'ye do, Byng? sorry I'm late!" and proffered his hand, our host said, "Sit down, sir! I never shake hot hands! get on with your dinner." Colonel Macdonald smiled and took his seat; but later on, Mr. Byng asking him if he liked the particular dish he was eating, he said it was "very good." "God bless my soul, sir," cried Byng, "what do you mean by that? Of course it's good, sir; everything that comes to this table is good. What I asked you was whether you liked it!"

John Cooper.

Mr. Byng was also always very much "down" upon John Cooper, a tragedian of the old school, pompous, solemn, pretentious, and dull. Cooper was a bit of a miser, and Byng was always delighted when the exercise of this niggardly spirit brought the actor to grief. On one occasion, a close summer's evening, when Cooper was expected to dinner, a violent rain-storm came on, and Mr. Byng confided to me his joy that Cooper, who lived in St. James's Place and generally walked across, would be compelled to take a cab. Presently a cab stopped at the door, and Cooper's sonorous voice was heard from the inside, bidding the cabman to knock at the door. "Not I," said the driver, calmly remaining on his box. "What do you mean?" asked Cooper; "I have paid you your fare already." "Fare!" growled the man, still enthroned; "you give me a shillin' when you got in: that was for drivin' of you, not for knockin'; get out and knock yourself!" And the man remaining obdurate, Cooper had to get out in the pouring rain and knock at the door, which the servant, acting under his delighted master's instructions, did not hurry himself to open.

The cabman's triumph.

The Baron.

The most regular *habitué* of Clarges Street, however, was a very old German gentleman, a certain Baron de—really, I suppose, von—Feilitzer, a bent, shrunken, wizened old fellow, over eighty years of age, who

had, according to the generally received legend, been a page to Frederick the Great, but who was only known to us as Mr. Byng's principal butt and toady. Notwithstanding his age, he had an enormous appetite, which he used to indulge without stint, his host observing him from time to time, and keeping up a running commentary on his proceedings, which was intended to be *sotto voce*, but which was distinctly audible round the delighted table. "Look at him, filling his baronial stomach! God bless my soul, was there ever seen anything like it! why, he eats more at one meal than I do in a month! Look at him putting it away!" And the object of his remarks, who knew perfectly what was going on, would look slyly up from his plate, and, without discontinuing operations, chuckle and say, "Ja, der Byng! der is fonny man!" and take no further heed. The Baron lived in lodgings over a celebrated baker's in Great Russell Street, Covent Garden—the shop is still there—and from time to time we, who, I suppose, must have been considered our patron's henchmen, were expected, after a heavy dinner in Clarges Street, to go off with Mr. Byng in a body to the Baron's lodgings in Covent Garden, where a large and thoroughly British supper of oysters, lobsters, and cold beef was awaiting us, which we were expected to eat. In deference to Mr. Byng's wishes, we used to struggle hard to swallow something, but he always declared that as soon as

we were gone the old Baron would set to and clear the board.

I owed a great deal to the kindness of my eccentric old godfather, at whose house and through whom I made many useful acquaintances at that time. He did not go to Court, owing to some slight in connection with a dispute in which his intimate friend, Sir John Conroy, was involved, and it was always understood that he had had the temerity to refuse a Royal invitation, which is, of course, a Royal command; but he was remembered by many great ladies, and through one of them, a patroness
Almack's. of Almack's, he obtained for me a card for one of the last balls of that expiring institution of exclusiveness, which was then held in Willis's Rooms. I did not know more than two people in the place, and passed a miserably dull evening; but I was accounted remarkably lucky to have obtained such an *entrée*, and rather fancied myself accordingly. Edmund Byng, who must not be confounded with his brother Frederick, well known as "Poodle" Byng, with whom he had little in common, died at an advanced age in 1854 or '55.

I went occasionally to dinner-parties and frequently to balls in my early days, when the *deux-temps* valse had just been imported into England, and we used to dance it to the inspiriting strains of Jullien's or Weippert's band; but I am afraid my real amuse-

ments were of a less sober and more Bohemian character. Dancing was just then commencing to be recognised in England as a national pursuit. The public balls of former days had been confined to the dreary "assemblies" of provincial towns, and in London there was nothing of the kind in winter; while in summer, Vauxhall, the ancient and grievously overrated, and Cremorne Gardens, the creation of which as a place of amusement out of the old finely timbered pleasaunce I can well remember, were our *al fresco* resorts. But in the year 1846, while I was in Germany, I had information from friends that one Emile Laurent, a Frenchman, had taken the old Adelaide Gallery, converted it into a paradise, and called it the Casino.

Dancing diversions

The Adelaide Gallery, which was situated at the northern, or St. Martin's Church, end of the Lowther Arcade (where as a child I used to eat buns at Miss Ehrhardt the confectioner's, and buy toys of John Binge, who combined toy-selling in the daytime with theatrical singing at night, and who was called "The Singing Mouse," owing to the smallness of his sweet tenor voice), was started as a science "show." Its principal attractions were Perkins's steam-gun, which discharged a shower of bullets, but was never adopted in serious warfare; and the gymnotus, or electrical eel, a creature which emitted shocks on its back being touched. Parents

The Adelaide Gallery.

and persons in charge of youth were great patrons of the Adelaide Gallery, which flourished until a rival institution appeared in the shape of the Polytechnic, in Upper Regent Street, which speedily and completely took the wind out of the sails of the original establishment.

The Polytechnic.

Ah me! the Polytechnic, with its diving-bell, the descent in which was so pleasantly productive of imminent head-splitting; its diver, who rapped his helmet playfully with the coppers which had been thrown at him; its half-globes, brass pillars, and water-troughs so charged with electricity as nearly to dislocate the arms of those that touched them; with its microscope, wherein the infinitesimal creatures in a drop of Thames water appeared like antediluvian animals engaged in combat; with its lectures, in which Professor Bachhoffner was always exhibiting chemistry to "the tyro;" with its dissolving views of "A Ship," afterwards "on fi-er," and an illustration of—as explained by the unseen chorus—"The Hall of Waters—at Constant—nopull—where an unfort—nate Englishman—lost his life—attempting — to discover the passage!"—with all these attractions, and a hundred more which I have forgotten, no wonder that the Polytechnic cast the old Adelaide Gallery into the shade, and that the proprietors of the latter were fain to welcome an entire and sweeping change of programme.

Such an entertainment as that afforded by Laurent's Casino had never been seen before in London. The hall was fairly large, and handsomely decorated; the band, led by young Laurent, and with a wonderful performer on the cornet, named Arban, played the liveliest tunes and kept superb time; and amongst the light refreshments was to be found the then recently-imported sherry-cobbler—in itself a source of delight to thirsty dancers, who, as ball beverages, had hitherto found nothing between nasty negus and fiery champagne. Laurent's Casino, no doubt for its novelty's sake, was visited by all kinds and conditions of men; it was altogether a quieter and more respectable place than the flaring flaunting Argyll Rooms into which it afterwards developed. Meanwhile, encouraged by its success, another concern of a somewhat similar character had been established. Laurent's Casino.

What is now the gorgeous Holborn Restaurant was in those days the dingy Holborn Swimming-bath —a very gloomy and, truth to tell, a very dirty and smelly place of recreation. I remember once, being mad about swimming—an art which I had just acquired in the delicious Brill's Bath at Brighton—coming to the Holborn establishment full of pleasurable anticipation; and I remember, as soon as I had seen and—well, smelt the water into which I proposed plunging, putting on my jacket again, and sacrificing the shilling which I had paid for my bath. The Holborn Casino.

Later, the dirty water was drained off, the shabby dressing-boxes done away with, the bath covered with a flooring of springy boards, and the whole place painted and renovated, and an excellent band, under the direction of a Mr. Parker (who maintained his position for years), engaged. There, too, as principal master of the ceremonies, was a curious old fellow called Gourriet, who, with Signor Venafra—who used to spend his days at Davis's, the tobacconist's in the Quadrant—had for years been one of the leading *ballerinos* at Her Majesty's Theatre, and whose rapt enthusiasm in beating time to the music, or pantomimic extravagance in soothing any little dispute, was equally delicious. The Holborn Casino was a much quieter place of resort than its rival, and was frequented by a different class: there was some element of respectability among its female visitors, while among the men the genus "swell," which predominated at the other place, was here almost entirely absent, the ordinary attendants being young fellows from the neighbouring Inns of Court, medical students, Government clerks, with a sprinkling of the shopocracy.

Mott's and Weippert's

There were one or two other and superior temples of Terpsichore—the Portland Rooms, generally known as "Mott's," from the proprietary, Mr. and Mrs. Mott, who had some connection with the ballet department of the Opera, and where, in

consequence, one generally found some pretty members of the corps among the dancers. The rooms were in what was then called Foley Place—a broad thoroughfare opposite the chapel in Great Portland Street—the admission-fee was half-a-crown, and there was a fair five-shilling supper, served in an oddly-shaped low-ceilinged room like the cabin of a ship. To shout "Pol-kar!" after the manner of Mr. Frere, the M.C. of the Portland Rooms, was in those days a very humorous performance. More aristocratic, but nothing like so popular, was "Weippert's," a weekly *réunion* held at the Princess's Concert-rooms, at the back of the Princess's Theatre, where dancing was carried on from late till early hours, to the music of Weippert's at that time celebrated band.

Vauxhall Gardens.

Travelling by the South-Western Railway, I often look out, in passing the Vauxhall Station, at a large square brick house, the sole landmark of the famous Vauxhall Gardens, long since covered with houses. This individual house was the residence of Mr. Wardell, the lessee of the Gardens, and the square space in front of it used to be filled all night with cabs waiting for hire. The palmy days of Vauxhall were, of course, long before my time, when Simpson, the renowned master of the ceremonies, flourished, and Jos Sedley got drunk on rack-punch, and large parties of the highest aristocracy visited the place, and supped in the queer little arbours and supper-

boxes with which it was dotted. The arbours and supper-boxes were there in my time, and facing the pay-place was a great sticking-plaster transparency of Simpson executing his celebrated bow, and with the words, "Welcome to the Royal Property!" in a ribbon surrounding his head; but the aristocracy had deserted it, and no wonder.

Amusements there.

It was a very ghastly place: of actual garden there was no sign; long covered arcades, gravel-strewn and lit with little coloured oil-lamps; an open-air orchestra, the front covered with a huge shell-shaped sounding-board, under which the singer stood; a few plaster statues dotted here and there; a hermit in a false beard, dwelling in a "property" cave, who told fortunes; a built-up scene in "profile" on the firework ground, representing sometimes Vesuvius, sometimes a town to be bombarded (the "Siege of Acre" was, I recollect, popular at one time), but always utilised for firework purposes. One year it was, I recollect, the Piazza of St. Mark at Venice; and an acrobat, calling himself Joel Il Diavolo, made a "terrific descent" from the top of the Campanile, coming head-first down a wire surrounded by blazing fireworks, and with squibs and crackers in his cap and heels. In our uncertain climate an open-air place of entertainment must always be a doubtful speculation, and vast sums of money were lost in Vauxhall, though Mr. Gye, afterwards

impresario of the Royal Italian Opera, was said to have made it pay. The liveliest time of the Gardens in my recollection was when its chief attraction was a circus, with Madame Caroline, who first introduced into England the ordinary habit-and-hat riding now so popular as the *haute école*, and Auriol, the prince of French clowns, whose merry self-satisfied cry of "Houp-là!" is a household word in ring-matters to the present day.

But certainly during my recollection Vauxhall Gardens was never a popular place of recreation. The charge for admission was high—seldom less than half-a-crown—and the journey there was long, difficult, and expensive; for, to add to the cab-fare, which was large, there was the bridge-toll and a turnpike—together ninepence. The refreshments partaken of by the "quality"—the skinny fowls, transparent ham, oleaginous salad, the champagne and rack-punch—were, of course, also enormously dear; but there was a sly spot at the back of the orchestra, where were dispensed to the knowing ones huge healthy sandwiches and foaming stout served in earthenware tankards, the pleasant memory of which abides by me yet. It may therefore be readily imagined that the impecunious youth of the period, among whom I was numbered, were much more in favour of Cremorne, which was opened as a public garden just about this time, and which, in

Too dear.

comparison with Vauxhall, at least was cheap and cheery.

Cremorne. The gardens were large and well laid out; some of the grand old trees had been left standing, and afforded pleasant relief to the town eyes which had been staring all day at brick and stucco, while their murmuring rustle was pleasant to the ears aching with the echo of city traffic. There were plenty of amusements—a circular dancing platform, with a capital band in a large kiosk in the middle; a lot of *jeux innocens*, such as you find at a French fair; once a week a balloon ascent, and a very good firework display. The admission-fee was one shilling; there was a hot dinner for half-a-crown, a cold supper for the same money; and it was not considered necessary, as at Vauxhall, to go in for expense; on the contrary, beer flowed freely: and it was about this time, I think, and at Cremorne, that the insidious "long" drinks—soda and "something"—now so popular, first made their appearance. Occasionally there were big banquets organised by certain "swells," and held there, when there would be heavy drinking, and sometimes a row—on Derby night, once, when there was a free fight, which lasted for hours, involving the complete smash of everything smashable; and I mind me of another occasion, when a gigantic Irishman, now a popular M.P., sent scores of waiters flying by the force of his own unaided fists. But, on

the whole, the place was well and quietly conducted, and five minutes after the bell for closing rang—just before midnight—the gardens were deserted. There was a general rush for the omnibuses and cabs, which were in great demand, and for one or two seasons there was a steamboat which left the adjacent Cadogan pier at the close of the entertainment, and carried passengers to Hungerford Bridge, and which was very popular.

I have mentioned the Adelaide Gallery and the Polytechnic Institution, and there were many other exhibition-places eminently respectable and popular in my youthful days, which have since been done away with, and the very names of which are now scarcely heard. Foremost of these was the Coliseum, on the east side of the Regent's Park, covering the space now occupied, I should say, by Cambridge Gate to the front and Coliseum Terrace to the rear—an enormous polygon, a hundred and twenty-six feet in diameter, and over a hundred feet high, built from the designs of Decimus Burton, whose best-known work nowadays is the Marble Arch. The industrious John Timbs, in his *Curiosities of London*, tells us that the Coliseum—or Colosseum, as he spells it—was so called from its colossal size, and not from any supposed resemblance to its namesake in Rome. But this spoils the story of the not too cultured cornet in the Blues, who from Rome wrote to his

The Coliseum.

friend, "I see they've got a Coliseum here, too; but it is not in such good repair as that one near our Albany Street Barracks." I remember it well—my father, in partnership with John Braham, once owned it, to his sorrow—with its wonderful panoramas of London by day and London by night, best things of the kind until eclipsed by the "Siege of Paris" in the Champs Elysées; its glyptotheca, full of plaster casts; its Swiss châlet, with a real waterfall, and a melancholy old eagle flopping about its "property" rocks; its stalactite cavern, prepared by Bradwell and Telbin; and its sham ruins near the desolate portico.* In a small dark tank in the interior of the building I once skated on some artificial ice; and there was a lecture-theatre, in which I found myself, just before the final doom of the establishment (I had come in for shelter from a rain-storm), one of an audience of three listening to an entertainment given by a little gentleman, who was nothing daunted by the paucity of his appreciators, and who sang and danced away as if we had been three thousand. This plucky neophyte, then very young, has since developed into that excellent actor, Mr. Edward Righton.

A small audience.

To the Coliseum, some years before its final fall,

* The gallery from which the vast panoramas of London were inspected was reached by a spiral staircase, and also by the "ascending room," the precursor of the "lifts," "elevators," and "ascenseurs," now to be found in every European and American hotel.

was added the Cyclorama—an extraordinarily realistic representation of the earthquake of Lisbon. The manner in which the earth heaved and was rent, the buildings toppled over, and the sea rose, was most cleverly contrived, and had a most terrifying effect upon the spectators; frightful rumblings, proceeding apparently from under your feet, increased the horror, which was anything but diminished by accompanying musical performances on that awful instrument, the apollonicon. Never was better value in fright given for money. The Diorama, on the east side of Park Square, Regent's Park (a chapel now stands on its site), was memorable from the fact that the room in which the spectator of the picture sat was made to revolve at intervals, so that the two scenes of which the exhibition consisted were brought into view without persons quitting their seats.

The Cyclorama.

The Diorama.

But far the best of all these panoramic shows was the series exhibited at the Old Gallery of Illustration in Waterloo Place, called "The Overland Route," and representing all the principal places between Southampton and Calcutta. This was the work of those admirable scene-painters, Thomas Grieve and William Telbin, and was executed in their painting-rooms in Charles Street, Drury Lane, a notorious thieves' quarter. The human figures were by Absolon, the animals by Herring and Harrison Weir. Such a combination of excellence had never

"The Overland Route."

been seen, and a clear, concise, and most pleasantly delivered descriptive comment on the passing scene by Mr. Stocqueler, an author and journalist of the day, enhanced the success, which was tremendous. In those days, too, there was always to be found on the north side of Leicester Square a clever panorama of some beautiful European scenery, painted, or at least owned, by a gentleman named Burford, of whom it was said that he could never be an orphan, as he was never without a pa-nor-a-ma. Also among daylight and respectable places of amusement of my youth were the Chinese Exhibition at the St. George's Gallery, Hyde Park, on the site where the "tap" of the Alexandra Hotel now is—an extraordinary collection of the details of Chinese life, with some admirable wax figures representing the different ranks and classes (a diorama of the Holy Land, a visit to which had a great effect on my life, as will be subsequently shown, was afterwards exhibited here), and the Chinese junk, a veritable Chinese vessel, manned by a Chinese crew, "without," as Dickens said, "a profile amongst the lot," which sailed from Hong-Kong and anchored in the Thames off gloomy Babylon. One of the petty officers of this junk, presenting himself at the ceremonial of the opening of the Great Exhibition in '51, with pigtail and national costume, and being mistaken for a grandee, was received with the greatest honour, and had one of the best places in the show.

Burford's Panoramas.

The Chinese junk.

Walking in the Park and perambulating the leading West End thoroughfares was a cheap and never-failing source of amusement to me in my youth. I soon learned to recognise the celebrities of the day of all kinds, and I generally had as companion some one who had served as a *flâneur* much longer than myself, and who enabled me to add to my list of acquaintance by sight. In those days the fashionable drive and promenade were along the north side of the Serpentine—just previously they had been from the Marble Arch to Apsley House—and there were as many carriages on Sundays as on any other day—perhaps more. I can well remember Lady Blessington, a fair, fat, middle-aged woman, in a big heavy swinging chariot, glistening—the chariot, not her ladyship—with varnish, and profusely emblazoned with heraldry, and with two enormous footmen, cane-carrying, powder-headed, and silk-stockinged, hanging on behind.* One of the Misses Power, her nieces, and remarkably pretty girls, generally accompanied her ladyship.

Celebrities in the Park.

Lady Blessington.

* The late John Heneage Jesse, "Jack Jesse" to his intimates, the well-known author, had an aversion, amounting to a positive 'phobia, for the British Jeames. He has been known to stand in St. James's Street on a Drawing-room day, at the edge of the kerb, and with the end of his stick, which he dipped into the road-puddle, daub the immaculate stockings of the passing flunkeys, who, as he well knew, dare not move from their stations, accompanying the act with much opprobrious language.

There, in a hooded cabriolet, the fashionable vehicle for men-about-town, with an enormous champing horse, and the trimmest of tiny grooms —"tigers," as they were called—half standing on the footboard behind, half swinging in the air, clinging on to the straps, would be Count d'Orsay, with clear-cut features and raven hair, the king of the dandies, the cynosure of all eyes, the greatest "swell" of the day. He was an admirable whip—he is reported on one occasion, by infinite spirit and dash, to have cut the wheel off a brewer's dray which was bearing down upon his light carriage, and to have spoken of it afterwards as "the triumph of mind over matter"—and always drove in faultless white kid gloves, with his shirt-wristbands turned back over his coat-cuffs, and his whole "turn-out" was perfection. By his side was occasionally seen Prince Louis Napoleon, an exile too, after his escape from Ham, residing in lodgings in King Street, St. James's—he pointed out the house to the Empress Eugénie when, as Emperor of the French, on his visit to Queen Victoria, he drove by it. He was a constant visitor of Lady Blessington's at Gore House. Albert Smith, in later years, used to say he wondered whether, if he called at the Tuileries, the Emperor would pay him "that eighteenpence," the sum which one night at Gore House he borrowed from A. S. to pay a cabman.

D'Orsay.

Louis Napoleon.

There were no photographs in the shop-windows

in those days, but the lithographed likenesses of beauties appearing in Albums and Keepsakes, and dear to Mr. Guppy and Mr. Jobling, enabled us to recognise some of the ladies we saw in their carriages or opera-boxes. The Duchess of Sutherland, Mistress of the Robes to the Queen, was then in the full splendour of her matronly beauty; the Duchess of Wellington, Lady Constance Leveson-Gower, afterwards Duchess of Westminster, Lady Clementina Villiers, and her sister Lady Adela Ibbetson, Lady Otway, Mrs. Norton, Lady Dufferin, Lady Pollington, Lady Duff-Gordon, were amongst the best known and the most renowned. There were handsome men in those days: Horace Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers; Cecil Forrester, now Lord Forrester; Manners Sutton, afterwards Lord Canterbury; Lincoln Stanhope; a knot of guardsmen—Henry de Bathe, Charles Seymour, Cuthbert Ellison, "Jerry" Meyrick, "Hippy" Damer, Henry Otway, Henry Collingwood Ibbetson, and his brother Captain Charles. Among the Park riders—a regimental band played twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, in Kensington Gardens, close by the Magazine, where the people promenaded, and the equestrians formed in a long line, with their horses' heads facing the sunken wall—I remember Lord Cantilupe, a tremendous swell, always lounging about and half-reclining on his horse's back, as he was inimitably portrayed by Doyle;

Beauties and beaux.

Park riders.

Matthew Higgins, "Jacob Omnium," an enormous man, gray-whiskered, stern-featured, but with soft eyes, riding an enormous horse; Lord Palmerston; the Duke of Wellington, acknowledging all salutations with his lifted forefinger, and closely attended by his groom; Dr. Billing, on an old white nag; Frank Grant, afterwards P.R.A.; Lord Cardigan, very stiff in the saddle; Lord Lucan, looking pretty much as he does now; Sir Bellingham Graham, a mighty hunter; and Jim Mason, the steeplechase-rider, whose seat and hands surely have never been surpassed.

Coaching was at its lowest ebb just then, and though I suppose the Four-in-Hand Club actually existed, I have only a remembrance of one "drag" which went about London, driven by a common-looking man, of whom the legend ran that he had been a butcher, and had money left him by his wife on condition of driving so many miles daily. But there were plenty of vehicular notabilities in the Park: the Hon. and Rev. Fitzroy Stanhope, easiest and most courteous of divines, in the four-wheeled trap called after his name; Lord Clanricarde, in a hooded phaeton with one horse, but that one a wonder; Lord Huntingtower, in a great banging, rattling mail-phaeton; Mr. Tod-Heatley, in the first private hansom cab ever seen in London. Gigs are now relegated to country doctors' use. Tilburys, with a spring behind; britskas, with a back

Park whips.

seat called a "rumble" for servants; chariots, with cane-bearing footmen, have all disappeared; and broughams, dog-carts, T-carts, and victorias have come in their place. In those days smoking in the street was an unpardonable solecism; a lady driving a pony would have been considered to have unsexed herself, while the man seated by her side and passively allowing her to drive would have been voted a milk-sop and a molly.

Social and political celebrities.

Sir George Wombwell and Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence were social celebrities of those times: the Damon and Pythias of clubland, they were scarcely ever seen apart. Constant companionship seemed to have made them alike—two red-faced, cheery, kindly, bell-hatted, frock-coated, wide-trousered old boys. A stroll in Parliament Street in the afternoon would always produce its crop of political celebrities: Sir Robert Peel, a demure-looking man, in a white waistcoat; Lord John Russell, very small, with too much hat and an unpleasant curl of the lip; Lord Elphinstone, very good-looking; Mr. Cobden, very common-looking; the Marquis of Lansdowne, a venerable personage; Mr. A. H. Layard, then just becoming known as the discoverer of Nineveh; a wild-eyed, thin, gesticulating creature, Chisholm Anstey, who impeached Lord Palmerston; and the eccentric Colonel Sibthorp. These were prominent persons whom I remember; but the introduction of photo-

graphy and the publication of portraits and caricatures by the illustrated journals have given notoriety to a vast number of persons who thirty years ago would have remained unknown.

Eating-houses.

Few places are more changed, and changed for the better, in the period of my memory, than the dining-rooms and restaurants of London. In the days of my early youth there was, I suppose, scarcely a capital city in Europe so badly provided with eating-houses as ours; not numerically, for there were plenty of them, but the quality was all round bad. And this was not for lack of custom, or of customers of an appreciative kind; for, as I shall have occasion to point out, there were comparatively few clubs at that time, and those which were in existence had not nearly so many members, nor were nearly so much frequented, for dining purposes at least, as they now are. There was not, it is true, in any class so much money to spend as there is now: young men who to-day sit down to soup, fish, *entrées*—then called "made dishes"—a roast, a bird, a sweet, a savoury, and a bottle of claret, would then have been content with a slice off the joint, a bit of cheese, and a pint of beer; but everything was fifty per cent cheaper in those times, and there was an ample profit on what was supplied.

The improvement, as I shall show, came in suddenly. There were no Spiers & Pond, and

of course none of the excellent establishments owned by them; no St. James's Hall, Café Royal, Monico's, Gatti's, Bristol or Continental restaurants, scarcely one of the now fashionable dining-houses. Verrey's was in existence, to be sure, but it was regarded as a "Frenchified" place, and was very little patronised by the young men of the day, though it had a good foreign connection. Dubourg's, in the Haymarket, opposite the theatre, was in the same category, though more patronised for suppers. The Café de l'Europe, next door to the Haymarket Theatre, originally started by Henry Hemming, who had been *jeune premier* at the Adelphi, was, notwithstanding its foreign name, a purely English house, as far as its cooking was concerned. All these places, however, were far beyond the means of me and my friends. If we wanted foreign fare —and truth to tell, in those days of youth and health, and vast appetite and little money, we were not much given to it—we would go to Rouget's in Castle Street, Leicester Square; or to Giraudier's in the Haymarket; or, best of all, to Berthollini's in St. Martin's Place, I think it was called—a narrow thoroughfare at the back of Pall Mall East. A wonderful man Berthollini: a tall thin Italian in a black wig—there was a current report that many of the dishes were made out of his old wigs and boots; but this was only the perversion by the ribalds of the

Foreign restaurants.

Berthollini's.

statement of his supporters, that the flavouring was so excellent that the basis of the dish was immaterial —who superintended everything himself and was ubiquitous; now flying to the kitchen, now uncorking the wine, now pointing with his long skinny forefinger to specially lovely pieces in the dish. There was a story that some rash man once asked to be allowed to inspect the kitchen, and that Berthollini had a fit in consequence. I have no doubt that the culinary preparations were mysterious; but they were well flavoured, highly seasoned, and much relished by us. They, and the pint of Chablis or claret—all red wine which was not port was claret in those days—were a pleasant change from the eternal joint, the never-to-be-avoided chop or steak, to which the tavern-diner was then condemned.

"Slap-bangs."

The "Slap-bang"—so called from the rate at which its meal was devoured, or from the easy manners of those who served it—was, in truth, not a very appetising place: it is admirably described in *Bleak House*, where Mr. Guppy entertains the hungry Jobling and the preternaturally-knowing Smallweed. At "Slap-bangs" napkins were unknown; the forks were steel-pronged, the spoons battered and worn, the tablecloths ring-stained with pewter pots and blotched with old gravy and bygone mustard. The room was partitioned off into "boxes," with hard and narrow seats, and a narrow slip of tressel-table between them: attendance was

given sometimes by females, fat and bouncing, like the "Polly" of Mr. Guppy's banquet; or dirty and slatternly; or by men in the shiniest and greasiest of black suits. I used frequently to dine at Izant's in Bucklersbury, where indeed everything was well done, mainly for the pleasure of being quit of these wretches, and being waited on by men dressed in wholesome clean linen blouses.

City taverns.

In the City, Tom's, Joe's, and Baker's; Dolly's Chop-house, the Daniel Lambert on Ludgate Hill, the Cheshire Cheese, the Cock, the Rainbow, Dick's, Anderton's—all in Fleet Street—the Mitre in Fetter Lane, the Southampton in Southampton Buildings, Rudkin's Salutation Tavern in Newgate Street, and a house in Brownlow Street, Holborn, where wonderful Burton ale was on draught, were much frequented.

West End restaurants.

More westerly places were Short's, the well-known wine-shop in the Strand, where at that time dinners were served in the upper rooms; its neighbour, the Edinburgh Castle; Campbell's Scotch Stores in Duke Street, Regent Street, where Mr. Blanchard, the founder of the celebrated Restaurant Blanchard, learned his business; Sinclair's Scotch Stores in Oxford Circus; and the American Stores near the Princess's Theatre: there were also some "Shades" under what is now the Empire Theatre, and what I have known variously as Miss Linwood's needlework exhibition, the

Walhalla for *poses plastiques*, Saville House for athletic shows, &c. &c. In these underground "Shades" a fair dinner at eighteenpence a head could be had in cleanliness and quiet; and Albert and Arthur Smith and I used frequently to dine there while the Mont Blanc entertainment was in embryo, and discuss its chances of success.

I well remember the excitement with which we young fellows about town received the rumour that a dining-place would shortly be opened where things would be done as at the clubs, and the eagerness with which we tested its truth. This, which was the pioneer of improvement, was the Grand Divan Restaurant, or, as it was better known, "Simpson's," in the Strand. The name of Simpson was at that time a power in the hotel and restaurant world. There were two brothers, one of whom had the well-known fish ordinary at Billingsgate—a tremendous repast for eighteenpence, where the water stood on the table in old hock bottles, where everything was of the best, and where, after the cloth had been removed, there was much smoking of long pipes and drinking of grogs. The other brother at that time owned the Albion, opposite Drury Lane Theatre, principally in vogue as a supper-house; and was afterwards the lessee of Cremorne Gardens. Rumour, for once, had not exaggerated; the whole thing was a revolution and a revelation. Large tables and com-

A revelation.

fortable chairs in place of the boxes and benches; abundance of clean linen tablecloths and napkins; plated forks and spoons; electro-plated tankards instead of pewter pots; finger-glasses; the joint wheeled to your side, and carved by a being in white cap and jacket; a choice of cheeses, pulled bread, and a properly made-out bill: all these were wondrous and acceptable innovations. The edibles and potables were all of first quality; the rooms were large and well ventilated; the attendants were clean, civil, and quick; and the superintendence of "Charles" —formerly of the Albion, but who had now blossomed into Mr. Daws—was universal. Of course every well-conducted restaurant nowadays is conducted on these principles—"all can grow the flower now, for all have got the seed;" but the honour of originating the new style belongs to Simpson. "Simpson's."

A want of a similar establishment at the West End was speedily supplied by the conversion of the fine building in St. James's Street—which, originally Crockford's Club, had been utilised as a dancing-shop and a picture-exhibition—into the Wellington Restaurant, which, carried out on Simpson's model, flourished for a time. The rent, however, was so enormous as to swallow up all the profits, and the concern was abandoned. Simpson's also served as the prototype for a more easterly imitator: Messrs. Sawyer & Strange, great refreshment contractors of that Imitations

day, started the "London dinner" in the upper floors of the house in Fleet Street, the corner of Chancery Lane, and for some time were successful.

Fish dinners.

Fish dinners at Greenwich and Blackwall were, I think, more in vogue then than they are now; indeed, the latter place, where Lovegrove's, the Brunswick, and the Artichoke flourished, is quite extinct as a dining-place. It was, I recollect, at Lovegrove's that the directors of the then existing General Screw Steam Shipping Company—of which Mr. J. Lyster O'Beirne was secretary—gave, after the launch of one of their vessels from Rolt & Mare's yard, a great lunch, at which Shirley Brooks was present, and which he utilised for descriptive purposes in the opening chapter of "Miss Violet and her Offers," his first contribution to *Punch*. The only Greenwich house of that day now remaining is the Trafalgar, little altered since it was owned by Mr. Hart, whose rival—Mr. Quartermaine, who established the present Ship—then conducted the Crown and Sceptre, now extinct or very much diminished.

Greenwich dinners.

In those days there were two smaller fish-dinner houses at Greenwich called, I think, the Yacht and the Ship Torbay. In those days people drove to Greenwich — the rail was comparatively little used by the luxurious—and every summer evening, and especially on a Sunday, there would be a serried phalanx of fifty or sixty horseless carriages, drags,

barouches, cabriolets, broughams, and hansoms outside the principal hotels. The laying of the tram-rails on the principal roads put an end to all possibilities of pleasant driving: the charioteers and owners of private vehicles declined to submit them to the unavoidable twists and wrenchings; and the result to the Greenwich tavern-keepers is, it is said, a loss of seven thousand a year. Richmond, as a dining-place, occupied then much the same position as now. The view was always better than the dinner. The old Star and Garter, since burned down, was a much more modest hostelry than the enormous edifice which stands on its site, and competed for custom with the Castle, recently closed. The Roebuck and the Talbot were as they now are; and at Hampton Court, beside the still existent Mitre and Greyhound at either end of the gardens, there was a famous hotel not far from the river called the Toy. Toton's—afterwards Wilcox's—at Mortlake, the Swan at Staines, the Bells of Ouseley, the Cricketers at Chertsey, were well known to the comparatively few men who took interest in the river; while below bridge Waite's Hotel at Gravesend was largely patronised by eastward-bound passengers who joined ship there.

Richmond dinners.

Those were the days of supper, for at that time a beneficent Legislature had not ordained that, at a certain hour, no matter how soberly we may be

enjoying ourselves in a house of public entertainment, we were to be turned into the streets. There were many houses which combined a supper with a dinner business; there were some which only took down their shutters when ordinary hard-working people were going to bed. Among the former were the oyster-shops—Quinn's in the Haymarket; Scott's, facing that broad-awake thoroughfare; a little house (name forgotten) in Ryder Street—not Wilton's, who closed at twelve; Godwin's, with the celebrated Charlotte as its attendant Hebe, in the Strand near St. Mary's Church. Godwin's was occasionally patronised by journalists and senators who lived in the Temple precincts: the beaming face of Morgan John O'Connell was frequently to be seen there; and Douglas Jerrold would sometimes look in. Charlotte was supposed to be one of the few who had ever silenced the great wit: he had been asking for some time for a glass of brandy-and-water; and when at length Charlotte placed before him the steaming jorum, she said, "There it is, you troublesome little man; mind you don't fall into it and drown yourself." Jerrold, who was very sensitive to any remarks upon his small and bent figure, collapsed.

Supper-houses.

Other famous oyster-houses of that day, as they are of this, were Lynn's in the Strand, Pimm's in the Poultry, and Sweeting's in Cheapside; but they were all closed at night. Restaurants where

Oyster-houses.

the presence of ladies at supper was encouraged rather than objected to were the Café de l'Europe, in the large room at the back (the front room, entered immediately from the street, was reserved for gentlemen, and will be mentioned elsewhere), and Dubourg's, already mentioned, the proprietor of which—a fat elderly Frenchman, his portly presence much girt with gold watch-chain—was a constant attendant at the Opera, and was well known to the *roués* of the day. Then there were the regular "night-houses," the company and the doings at which were, I imagine, equivalent to those at "The Finish," as depicted in the career of Tom and Jerry by George Cruikshank. There were many; but the two best known and most frequented were the Blue Posts and "Bob Croft's."

Night-houses.

The Blue Posts—not to be confounded with the well-known tavern of the same name in Cork Street—in the lower portion of the Haymarket, was, I suppose, an ordinary public-house, though it never struck any of its frequenters to regard it in that light. For a vast number of people it was the regular place of adjournment on the closing of the theatres and the dancing-halls. At midnight the passage from the outside door, the large space in front of the bar, the stairs leading to the upper rooms, the upper rooms themselves, were closely packed by a dense mass of men and women, through which no man but one could

The Blue Posts.

have forced his way. This was a waiter, a great favourite, owing to his imperturbable good-humour, and well known from his peculiar cry of "Mind the sauce, please! mind the sauce and the gravy!" with which he, heavily laden with supper-trays, would steer his way through the throng. The house, taken for what it was, was exceedingly well conducted; and though the conversation might have been more choice and more subdued, any rowdyism was at once put down. This was, in a measure, due to the respect felt by the regular frequenters for the landlord and landlady, an old Scotch couple named Dick, shrewd and business-like, but withal kindly, quiet, respectable people, who did many a good turn to some of their customers when out of luck. They lived at Hampstead, going up there in the early morning, coming down into London late at night; and I often thought of the strange contrast between their daylight existence, among their flowers and birds, in fresh air and perfect quiet, and the thick atmosphere reeking with spirits and tobacco, the roar and din and confusion of the strange company in which their nights were passed.

Bob Croft's.

"Bob Croft's" was a much later house, and one of a different stamp, though he too lived in the daytime in the country, in a pretty cottage at Kingston Hill. He was a burly, red-faced, jolly-looking fellow, in a white waistcoat, not without humour of a very broad kind,

and famous for much undiluted repartee. When the balloon in which Albert Smith and others ascended from Vauxhall came to grief, and Albert was spilt into the road, he was picked up by Croft, who used to narrate the story as a strange meeting of two celebrated characters. Bob Croft's daughter married a baronet, and afterwards appeared with fair success on the stage.

Gambling-houses.

Although the palmy days of public gambling were over, there were several private, very private, establishments at which the interesting games of roulette and French hazard were nightly played, and where the stakes varied from a five-pound note to a humble half-crown. The Berkeley in Albemarle Street; and Lyley's; Morris's in Jermyn Street, over a bootmaker's shop; "Goody" Levy's—the gentleman who came to grief over the Running Rein case—in Panton Street: these and several others flourished at the time, prototypes of "The Little Nick," where readers of *Pendennis* will remember Sir Francis Clavering wooed fickle Fortune. The *modus operandi* was pretty much the same everywhere. You pulled a bright-knobbed bell, which responded with a single muffled clang, and the door was opened silently by a speechless man who closed it quickly behind you. Confronting you was another door, generally sheeted with iron covered with green baize: in its centre a small glazed aperture, through which the visitor, in his temporary quaran-

tine, was closely scrutinised. If the survey was unsatisfactory—if, that is to say, he looked like a spy or a stranger merely prompted by curiosity—he was bidden to be off, and in case of need he was thrust out by the strong and silent porter. If he were known, or "looked all right," the door was opened, and the visitor passed up richly-carpeted stairs into the first floor. The front room was set apart for play: a long table covered with a green cloth, divided by tightly stretched pieces of string into the spaces for the "in" and the "out"—the game being hazard—and a few chairs for the players; the croupiers, each armed with a hooked stick, instead of the usual rake, for the collection of the money, faced each other in the middle of the table; the shutters were closed, and thick curtains were drawn. The back room was given up to a substantial supper of cold chickens, joints, salads, &c., which with sherry, brandy, &c., was provided gratis. In the places I have named the play, taken for what it was, was perfectly fair, so that there was no occasion for the presence of sham players, "bonnets," as they are called, who act as decoys; the company was mostly composed of men-about-town, the majority of them middle-aged, with occasionally a lawyer, a West End tradesman, and almost invariably a well-known usurer, who came there, however, to play, not to ply his trade.

Money was lost and won without display of excitement: I never saw anything approaching a "scene" in a London gaming-house. The greatest excitement was once, when about 2 A.M., in the middle of play, after a sharp whistle outside which caused the croupiers at once to cut and clear away the strings dividing the table, and to cover it with a white cloth, swallowing, as some said, the dice—at all events, instantly hiding them—we heard a tremendous crash below, and found the police were breaking down the iron door with sledge-hammers. The scene was very like that so cleverly portrayed in *Artful Cards*: when the inspector and his men entered, they found a few gentlemen peacefully supping, smoking, and chatting. We had to give our names and addresses, but never heard any more of it.

French hazard.

The most popular places of resort for such young men as kept late hours were, however, the supper-and-singing taverns, which were always respectably conducted, though in my early days there was an element of ribaldry in the amusement provided which was afterwards suppressed. The best known of these were the Coal Hole, the Cider Cellars, and Evans's. The Coal Hole was in a court out of the Strand, near the Cigar Divan, Fountain Court I think it is called. It has long since been appropriated to other purposes, and is now the Occidental Tavern. The landlord was one John Rhodes, a burly fellow with a bass

Song-and-supper taverns.

The Coal Hole.

voice, who sat at the head of the singers' table and joined in the glees, which were sung without instrumental accompaniment. From my recollection of Rhodes and his room, I imagine that he was Hoskins, the landlord of the Cave of Harmony, where Costigan sang the outrageous song which caused Colonel Newcome to rate the company. It is certain that "little Nadab, the improvisatore," of whom Thackeray speaks, was a certain Mr. Sloman, who called himself "the only English improvisatore," who used to sing at the Coal Hole, and the outpourings of whose improvisations were remarkably like the specimens given in *The Newcomes*. Only, in my time at least, the singing at the Coal Hole was confined to professionals, and no visitor would have been allowed to volunteer a song, as did the Colonel. The celebrities of the place were Rhodes himself; a young fellow called Cave—the first, I believe, to introduce to England the American banjo as an accompaniment for the voice; and a dreadful old creature called Joe Wells, who used to sing most disgusting ditties. The Coal Hole never had the reputation or the position of either of its rivals, and was the first to succumb to the alteration in public taste.

The Cider Cellars.

The Cider Cellars, next to the stage-door of the Adelphi in Maiden Lane, now converted into a Jewish synagogue, had deservedly a far wider renown. It was described, under its own name,

by Albert Smith in the *Medical Student* and *Mr. Ledbury*, and was the prototype of the Back Kitchen, immortalised in *Pendennis*. Thus Thackeray chronicles its company: "Healthy country tradesmen and farmers in London for their business came and recreated themselves with the jolly singing and suppers of the Back Kitchen; squads of young apprentices and assistants—the shutters being closed over the scene of their labours—came hither, for fresh air doubtless; rakish young medical students, gallant, dashing, what is called loudly dressed, and, must it be owned? somewhat dirty, came here, smoking and drinking and vigorously applauding the songs; young University bucks were to be found here too, with that indescribable simper which is only learned at the knees of Alma Mater; and handsome young guardsmen, and florid bucks from the St. James's Street clubs; nay, senators—English and Irish—and even members of the House of Peers." Thackeray goes on to say that all these sorts and conditions of men assembled to hear a bass singer named Hodgen, who had made an immense hit with his song of the "Body-snatcher." The singer from whom Hodgen was drawn was a man named Ross, and the song which he sang and which had the enormous success which Thackeray describes was called "Sam Hall," the chant of a murderous chimney-sweep of that name just before his execution. It was

The "Back Kitchen."

Ross.

a good bit of realistic acting: the man, made up with a ghastly face, delivered it sitting across a chair, and there was a horrible anathematising *refrain*. The effect produced was tremendous, and for months and months, at the hour when it was known that "Sam Hall" would be sung, there was no standing-place in the Cider Cellars. When I first knew the place its landlord was William Rhodes, brother of the Coal Hole proprietor; but he died before the "Sam Hall" mania, and the person who profited by that was his widow, a clever managing woman, who conducted the general business with great success. The entertainment provided was of the same class as at the Coal Hole: in the early days I remember a comic singer named Pennikett, another named Labern; later on, a man named Moody, who sang well and gave excellent imitations.

His song of "Sam Hall."

But of all these places the most celebrated, undoubtedly, in its time, and the most likely to be remembered hereafter, was Evans's, at the western corner of the Covent Garden Piazza, under the building which was then an hotel and is now the New Club. This room, as well as the Coal Hole, has figured as the "Cave of Harmony" in Thackeray's writings; to it little Grigg conducts Mr. Spec—"So we went through the Piazza, and down the steps of that well-remembered place of conviviality"—in the course of their "night's pleasure," and there they encounter

Evans's.

Bardolph of Brasenose. "Evans's late Joy's" was the unintentionally punning inscription on the lamp when I first knew it; but even then Evans had departed, and the presiding spirit was John, better known as "Paddy," Green—a worthy fellow, who had been a chorus-singer at the Adelphi, and whose courtesy and good temper won him vast popularity. For the first few years of my acquaintance with it the concert-room was small and low-pitched, with a bit added on at right angles at its extreme end. But even then it had a good reputation for music. John Binge the tenor, S. A. Jones the basso, the host himself, were well known as singers; Herr von Joel—a queer old German, who sang *jödling* ditties, played tunes on what he called a "vokingshteeck," and gave capital imitations of the birds and beasts of a farmyard—was a great attraction; while the comic element, as supplied by Sharp and Sam Cowell, was unapproachable elsewhere. No man in my recollection, as a broadly comic vocalist, has been such a favourite as was J. W. Sharp: at Vauxhall and Cremorne in the summer, at public dinners in the winter, and at Evans's always, he was fully employed. But he fell into bad ways, took to drinking, lost his engagements, and was finally found *dead from starvation* on a country road. Cowell was an actor as well as a singer, and had a certain amount of success on the stage.

"Paddy" Green.

It was in this small room that Bardolph of Brasenose signalled his desire for more drink by whack-whacking with the pewter noggin, and that Thackeray heard the sentimental and the piratical ballad which he parodied so deliciously. After a time a change took place in the style of entertainment: all ribald songs—and often Evans's had been quite as profane as its rivals—were stopped for ever, and the choruses were sung by trained young lads, whose sweet fresh voices were heard with charming effect in the old glees and madrigals. The little room was too small for the audience; it was pulled down, and a vast concert-room built on its site, with a stage where the singers stood, and an annexe —a comfortable kind of hall, hung with theatrical portraits, &c.—where conversation could be carried on, and it was by no means necessary to listen to the music.

A change for the better.

The public thronged to the concert-room—there was a private supper-room in the gallery, looking down on the hall through a *grille*, where ladies could hear the songs and could see without being seen—and the annexe became, and continued for several years, a popular resort for men-about-town. Thackeray was constantly there; Serjeant Murphy, Serjeant Ballantine, Jerrold, Lionel Lawson ; sometimes Sala, Hannay, and some of the younger men ; Albert and Arthur Smith, fresh from the "Show;" Horace

The annexe.

Mayhew, very occasionally Leech. Chops and potatoes —never to be equalled—were the ordinary supper; as Mrs. Prig says, "the drinks was all good;" and some of the smartest talk in London was to be heard at Evans's about the years '58 to '60, when the old night clubs had ceased to be, and the present ones had not been thought of. Through concert-room and annexe Paddy Green wandered, snuff-box in hand, God-blessing his "dear boys"—*i.e.* every one to whom he spoke—and getting more and more around him as the night wore on. He prospered for many years and ought to have made a fortune; but he did not, and the introduction of music-halls, where women formed the larger portion of the audience, was the signal for his downfall.

The Garrick's Head.

One other place of public entertainment, though neither singing nor supper house, must be mentioned here. The Garrick's Head was a large tavern in Bow Street, facing Covent Garden Theatre; its landlord was one Renton Nicholson, a clever, versatile, wholly unprincipled fellow, who had been connected with the turf, connected with the stage, had owned and edited an atrociously blackguard weekly journal called *The Town*, and at the Garrick's Head had instituted a new kind of dramatic performance, in which he played the principal character. The entertainment was called "The Judge and Jury Society," and was a parody on the proceedings in

The Judge and Jury.

those law-courts where actions of a certain character were tried; was presided over by Nicholson himself as the Lord Chief Justice, in full wig and gown; the case being argued out by persons dressed as, and in some instances giving also imitations of, leading barristers, and the witnesses being actors of more or less versatility and mimetic ability. The whole affair was written and arranged by Nicholson, who deported himself on the bench with the most solemn gravity, the contrast between which and his invariable speech on taking his seat—"Usher! get me a cigar and a little brandy-and-water"—was the signal for the first laugh. The entertainment was undoubtedly clever, but was so full of grossness and indecency, expressed and implied, as to render it wholly disgusting. In the window of the tavern was a large painting representing the mock trial, with Nicholson on the bench, and all the celebrities of the day ranged round the room: underneath this picture was a set of verses, supposed to have been written in honour of the place by Tom Moore, and beginning, as I recollect:

> "O, where can you better enjoy your late glasses
> Than under that fane, where the genius of wit
> Illumines each grain of our sand as it passes?" &c.

Equestrianism.

Among the amusements of my youth I must not forget my athletic exercises, from which I derived so much benefit and delight. I first rode in Rotten

Row—having made previous experiments at Brighton —in the year 1849, on a horse hired for the season from Peter Howden, job-master, of York Terrace Mews; the yard is there still, though Peter's last job —a black one—was long since done. With very little intermission, I have ridden there every succeeding year up to the present. I began rowing on the Thames in the year 1847, and continued the practice, off and on, until the year 1878, when I changed my skiff into a steam-launch. In the early days I and two Post Office colleagues had a randan gig built for us by Searle of Putney, where, under the charge of the head man, Miller, we used to keep her. Our usual evening's pull was up to Richmond—if we had time—and back to the White Hart at Mortlake, kept by old Toton, where we had supper off ham and eggs and shandy-gaff.

Rowing.

I was also exceedingly fond of sparring, which I learned first from old Nat Langham, in an empty room of a tavern in the Strand, where the barracks of the Commissionaires now are, and afterwards from young Alec Keene, a mighty pretty fighter. I never had much science, but being strong and very long in the reach, and being able to take a good amount of "punishment," I was rather an awkward customer. Years after I had given up the gloves, I was looking on at a wrestling exhibition in Leicester Square, and was thinking how savagely it

Sparring.

was conducted, and what frightful concussions the thrown men received, when I felt my arm touched by Alec Keene, whom I had not seen for ages, but who said, with a smile, "You and I used to knock each other about at one time, Mr. Yates, but I don't think we could either of us have stood much of this!"

CHAPTER V.

THE DRAMA IN THOSE DAYS.

1847—1852.

THE number of theatres in London in the present year of grace is, according to that excellent authority on all dramatic matters, the *Era Almanack*, thirty-seven; in the year 1847 it was thirteen, including HER MAJESTY'S and COVENT GARDEN, which were both devoted to Italian opera, and the ST. JAMES'S, where, during the brief season in which it was open, French plays were performed by French players. In this number I reckon the transpontine SURREY and VICTORIA, and the suburban SADLER'S WELLS, but not the far-eastward PAVILION, nor the GRECIAN and BRITANNIA, which, though in existence, called themselves, in those days, "Saloons;" indeed, the former was then still known as the Eagle Tavern. The theatres of which I speak were HER MAJESTY'S, COVENT GARDEN, DRURY LANE, HAYMARKET, LYCEUM, PRINCESS'S, ADELPHI, OLYMPIC, ST. JAMES'S, SADLER'S WELLS, MARYLEBONE, SURREY, VICTORIA; and of these, according to my knowledge of them, I propose to speak in detail.

Number of theatres in '47.

Her Majesty's.

To HER MAJESTY'S I had already been introduced in my schoolboy days by the kindly daughter of Mr. Williams, a friend of my mother's, and a partner in Cockburn's Bank, at the corner of Whitehall Place, where she kept her bank account. This worthy lady, herself passionately fond of music, imagined every one else must be in a similar condition; but though I was glad enough to accompany her, the chief attractions to me then were the lights and the company; later on, the charms of the *ballet* asserted their sway.

The opening of the season of '47 at HER MAJESTY'S was exceptionally dull; the great feud between Mr. Lumley, the lessee, and his conductor, Signor Costa, and principal singers, Madame Grisi and Signor Mario, had been followed by the secession of the best part of the *troupe*, and the conversion of COVENT GARDEN THEATRE into an opera-house, under the management of Messrs. Delafield and Gye. "Bones," boxes, and general admissions were to be had for the asking at HER MAJESTY'S, until the

Saved by Mdlle. Lind.

appearance—long heralded and eagerly expected—of Mdlle. Jenny Lind, in the early days of May, had an immediate effect in not merely restoring the failing fortunes of the theatre, but brought with it an amount of pecuniary success hitherto unknown.

I do not know how I could have received a hint of the importance of that *début*, for I certainly was not in any musical circle—I suppose I derived my

impression from the general talk; but it is certain that I made up my mind to be present on the night when Mdlle. Jenny Lind should make her first bow to the English public, and equally certain that I carried out my intention. Every retainable seat had been retained for weeks; that made no difference to me—even a place in the pit was beyond my small means; but I was young and strong and active, and at a few minutes before noon on Tuesday, the 4th May, I took my place among twenty persons then gathered round the gallery-door of the opera-house in the Haymarket. Mdlle. Lind's *début*.

The twenty soon swelled into two hundred, into five hundred, into uncountable numbers; and there we stood, swaying hither and thither, joking, chaffing, panting, groaning, until the doors were opened at seven P.M., and away we went with a rush. I had brought some sandwiches and a pocket-flask with me, and was in good condition luckily; for anything like that crowd I have never experienced. There were women amongst us, and just as I neared the door I heard a feeble whisper in my ear, "For God's sake, help me! I'm fainting!" I could not move my arms, which were pinioned to my sides, but I turned my head as best I could, and said, "Catch hold of me, and I'll pull you up." The woman—I never saw her face—put her arms round my waist—I had a waist in those days—and, thus burdened, I struggled on. I reached and mounted The struggle for the gallery.

the staircase; I put my hand, with the exact admission-money in it, into the hole in the pay-box, whence at first it was swept out, with a score other hands, by the maddened money-taker; but I succeeded: I got my pass-check, and, still burdened, I fought to the top of the staircase, where my check was demanded. It was then discovered that my unfortunate passenger had not paid her money, and had received no check. She released me; she was refused admittance, and was literally carried off on the human tide. I heard no more of her. When I reached my goal—the third row in the gallery—I sat down there, perspiring and exhausted, and, following the example of all round me, I took off my coat. The first notes of the overture to *Robert le Diable* found the gallery in its shirt-sleeves; but we were clothed and in our right minds before the opera began.

Nearly crushed.

The next time I heard Mdlle. Lind was from the same coign of vantage, about a month later, on her first appearance in *Norma*, and, as this performance was attended by the Queen in state, I had equal difficulty in getting in. This was the first pageant I had ever beheld, and I perfectly remember the gorgeous appearance of the Royal box, with the Beefeaters on the stage below. The performance itself was unquestionably a failure: the adherents of the theatre tried to talk about a "new reading" of the character of the Druidical priestess; but the public

A state performance.

would have none of it; and it was generally allowed that Grisi's Norma remained untouched.

Of Mdlle. Jenny Lind's extraordinary and unequalled success here and in America, of her quarrel with Mr. Bunn, of her domestic virtues and social triumphs, there is no need to say more in these pages. She had two admirable supporters in the sweet-voiced Gardoni and the splendid Lablache; but, with two exceptions, the operatic *troupe* was weak. It was to his *ballet* that Mr. Lumley looked for his principal attraction, independently of Jenny Lind. Mdlle. Lind's success.

And well he might; for surely neither before nor since was that style of entertainment brought to such a pitch of perfection. I have seen the famous *pas de quatre* danced by Taglioni, Cerito, Carlotta Grisi, and Lucille Grahn, the last one of the tallest of women, but extraordinarily graceful. I have seen more than a score of times—for it was my favourite *ballet—Esmeralda*, with Carlotta Grisi, bright, audacious, supple, and *piquante* to a degree, with Perrot—a little, ugly, pock-marked man, but a marvellous pantomimist—as Pierre Gringoire. The witchery of a *pas* called *La Truandaise*, as danced by this couple, is quite inexpressible. Mdlle. Plunkett, sister of Madame Doche, the French actress, was also a famous dancer of those days. The ballet.

This was the first season of the ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA HOUSE, into which old COVENT GARDEN Royal Italian Opera.

THEATRE had been metamorphosed, and the rivalry between it and the lyric establishment in the Haymarket was intense. It may be said generally that HER MAJESTY'S was supported by the older, the ROYAL ITALIAN by the younger, section of opera-goers; and I remember it was the fashion of the younger men to wear, in evening dress, black ties, in contrast to the large double-folded white cravats which were *de rigueur* at the Haymarket house.* What productions were those under Costa's *bâton*, and with the executants whom he had lured from their old allegiance! So long as I live I shall, I suppose, remember my first experience of *Lucrezia Borgia*, with Grisi's entrance on the gondola, the sleeping Mario, the "Com' e bello," the *trio* between these two and Tamburini, Orsini's drinking-song as interpreted by Alboni, and the horror of the *finale*. What a company! In addition to these, Madame

Lucrezia Borgia.

* As I was revising this chapter in proof I received a letter from Captain Dawson Damer, who says: "I have lost an old friend in Hayward. I only heard from him a short time ago; it was in regard to 'white ties.' I asked him when they came into fashion. He replied, 'One night, about 1850 (?), about the very last night of Vauxhall, the elder Miss Berry, *aged eighty-five*, Horace Walpole's flame, asked me to escort her there, and she suddenly, on entering the Gardens, looked at my white tie, and she said to me, "The last time I was here I came with Beau Brummell, who wore a white neckcloth for the first time; and it attracted much notice, and there rose an inquiry whether B. B. had taken orders."'"

Persiani, Signor Ronconi, Tagliafico; later on, Formes, whom I recollect as sexton at Mühlheim am Ruhr, not far from Düsseldorf, Madame Dorus Gras, Miss Catherine Hayes, M. Massol, Mdlle. Angri, and Mdlle. de Méric. The London world went quite mad over the production of *Les Huguenots*, almost as mad over the production of *Le Prophète*, in which, by the way, roller-skating was first introduced.

At DRURY LANE, in my boyish days, English opera, composed by Balfe or Wallace and written by Alfred Bunn, had been the great attraction, and often had I listened to Miss Romer's narration of her dream of dwelling in marble halls, Miss Rainforth's charming contralto, Mr. Harrison's reedy tenor, and Mr. Borrani's (*né* Borrigan) nasal baritone, his songs, "The heart bowed dowd" and "Hear be, gentle Baritada," being favourite subjects of imitation among the musical young men. But at the time of which I write, DRURY LANE was almost wholly given up to the great Jullien, whose Promenade Concerts were by far the greatest success of their day: a little man, with a pale face and bright beady eyes, always at night elaborately dressed, with a worked shirt-front and huge white waistcoat and turned-back cuffs. He had been, according to some, a waiter at a *café*, according to others, a bandsman in a regiment; but all were agreed that he was a charlatan. *That* was visible to every naked eye in his puffs and programmes, in his

Bunn's operas.

Jullien.

posters and advertising vans, in the manner in which he led his musicians—dancing a-tiptoe, softly soothing, with outstretched palm, wildly exciting with whirling *bâton*, driving to fury with maniacal gesticulation, then, spent and exhausted, falling back, panting and breathless, into his gilded chair.

He *was* a charlatan, I will admit; but as a man—I knew him well—he was kindly, cheery, generous, and loyal, and as a musician he was perhaps the greatest benefactor this country has ever had; for to him, more than to any one else, is to be ascribed the popularising of music among the English people.

Promenade Concerts.

To this end he got together a splendid band—which, for numbers and excellence, at that time had never been equalled, and since has never been excelled—wherein Kœnig played the cornet, Richardson the flute, Lazarus the clarionet, Baumann the oboe, and Prospère the ophicleide; engaged solo-singers, foremost among them being Mdlle. Jetty Treffz, whose ballad, "Trab, trab," created a *furore*, and Miss Dolby; solo instrumentalists like Sivori and Vieuxtemps. Jullien's own polkas and valses—the "Olga" and the "Bridal," the "Row" and "Drum" polkas, the "British Army Quadrilles"—and Kœnig's "Post-horn Galop," were commonplace enough, no doubt; but they took the taste of the town. *L'appetit venait en mangeant;* and when the public was ready for it, Jullien provided, from time to time, a better kind of musical pabulum.

The regular annual series of concerts was invariably wound up by a *bal masqué*, which was conducted with more spirit than is usually to be found in England in connection with such an affair. One of the principal promoters of fun was Horace Mayhew, who, dressed in a Robespierre garb, and accompanied by some of his brothers and a select band of followers, pervaded the *salle*. His English chaff and French *badinage* were equally fluent and excellent, full of fun, without the least coarseness, and his presence was a looked-for and welcome feature of the entertainment. Hitherto masquerades in England had been very ghastly gatherings: the solemn Charles the Seconds, Spanish noblemen, Leporellos, knights in armour, friars, and bewigged barristers had been supplemented by a would-be comic crew of clowns, pantaloons, and "romps"—young females in short petticoats, with hoops or skipping-ropes, with which they belaboured the bystanders. Under Jullien's *régime*—or rather under Mr. F. Gye's, for the arrangements were under the superintendence of that gentleman—all these objectionable characters were excluded, and the *bal masqué* became so much of an institution as to be described in all its ramifications in a very smartly written shilling book, in that style of which *The Gent* was the precursor, professedly written by "the Count Chicard," but really, I imagine, the work of Horace Mayhew.

Bals masqués.

In the year 1847, however, M. Jullien undertook

for himself at DRURY LANE a far more ambitious task —nothing less than the production of operas in English, on a far more complete scale than had been yet attempted, and supported by artists hitherto unknown to the English public. In the beginning of December he carried his project into effect with infinite spirit. His band, under the direction of the famous Hector Berlioz, was excellent, and the chorus, probably the largest and the most complete ever heard in an English theatre, was admirably disciplined and under perfect control. The first production was *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and the next day the town was ringing with the praises of the new tenor, Mr. Sims Reeves, who had proved himself more than worthy of the great expectations which had been raised concerning him. I perfectly recollect the tumultuous roars of applause evoked by his great scene at the end of the second act, and have a remembrance of roars of another kind, occasioned by the very comic manner in which, under the influence of great excitement, he persisted in shaking his head. His "Fra poco"—rendered, I remember, "From these fond arms they tore thee"—was enormously effective; and when the curtain fell, Mr. Sims Reeves was enrolled as a first favourite with the public, which for more than thirty-five years has never deserted him. Another successful *début* of that night was that of Mr. Whitworth as Colonel Ashton—a handsome

Jullien's season of English opera.

Début of Mr. Sims Reeves.

man, whom I see about London to this day. I am afraid that the poor Mons., as *Punch* used to call him, from the way in which he always heralded himself on his posters, "Mons. Jullien," came to financial grief over his English opera experiment. It did not, if I remember rightly, last very long, though during its course he produced without much success a new opera of his own composition called *Peter the Great*, as well as various standard works.

Drury Lane.

And then DRURY LANE fell back into being a home for any kind of entertainment, no matter what. In a very smartly written *brochure*, Charles Mathews once called it a huge theatrical omnibus; and so it was. What have I seen and heard within its walls? Franconi's circus *troupe*, with Caroline and Mathilde in the *haute école*, and the fascinating Palmyre Anato in the "leap of streamers," which used to draw all the youth of London; German opera, with Pischek; James Anderson's *régime;* Shakespeare, with the manager, Vandenhoff, and lovely Miss Laura Addison; *Azael the Prodigal*, a tolerably close version of the Scripture story, in which John Cooper played a high priest with much pompous unction; and *Ingomar:* Mr. James Anderson, a manly and vigorous actor, one of Macready's favourite lieutenants, being still alive, a hale and hearty gentleman.

Mr. James Anderson's management.

Charles Mathews himself, all his delicate *finesse* and admirable byplay swallowed up in the enormous

Mr. E. T. Smith's *régime.*

stage, played engagements here under the management of Mr. E. T. Smith: a strange person, said to have been originally a policeman, a shrewd, uneducated, good-natured vulgarian, of a dreadful back-slapping, Christian-name calling familiarity, who in his time entered on theatrical lesseeship on a large and varied scale. The days when Halliday was the stock author of the house; the production of *The Great City*, partly plagiarised from *Great Expectations; Amy Robsart* and dramatic versions of the Waverley novels, in which the lovely Adelaide Neilson was the great attraction: successive seasons of Italian opera: the Chatterton dynasty: finally, after the "marvellous boy" had "perished in his pride," the advent of Mr. Augustus Harris, who seems to be more capable or more fortunate than any of his predecessors.

The *Monte Cristo* row.

I forgot to mention the great *Monte Cristo* row, which occurred at DRURY LANE in the summer of 1848, and at which I was present. The *troupe* of the Théâtre Historique from Paris were announced for a short series of performances, but on the opening night a band of opponents took possession of the pit, and prevented a syllable being heard throughout the evening. The riot was renewed the next night, and one of the leaders of the malcontents being arrested proved to be Sam Cowell, an actor and comic singer already mentioned. There was a good deal of free fighting, and as one of the incidents I remember a

huge strawberry pottle being hurled at Albert Smith, who had just issued a sixpenny book called *A Pottle of Strawberries*, and who was conspicuously active on the side of the Frenchmen.

My experience of good acting and sound English comedy is more due to the HAYMARKET than to any other theatre. As a boy I had seen there *London Assurance*, *Old Heads and Young Hearts*, *Time Works Wonders*, *Bubbles of the Day*, and *Money*, played by old William Farren, Strickland, David Rees, James Vining, Walter Lacy, Webster, Charles Mathews, Harley, James Anderson, and Macready; Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nisbett, Miss P. Horton, and Madame Vestris. On my return to England in 1847, Mr. Webster, the lessee, very kindly placed my name on his free list, and for years I went to his theatre once or twice a week. Not to the dress-circle, though: there was no entrance money to be paid, but for a seat in the dress or upper circle I should have had to tip a box-keeper, and I could not afford that. So I used to scurry up the stairs to the "slips," in those days a row of seats on either side the house on the gallery level, and from the slips of the old HAYMARKET Theatre, before the Bancroft renovation, I have seen some of the finest acting of my day.

The Haymarket.

Comedies, for instance: Mrs. Nisbett as Constance in *The Love Chase*, with Webster as Wildrake, and Mrs. Glover as Widow Green. This was on the occa-

Mrs. Nisbett.

sion of Mrs. Nisbett's return to the stage, after the death of her second husband, Sir William Boothby. She was a very lovely woman of the ripe-peach style, large eyes and pouting lips. One night, about this time, I went behind the scenes, and was presented to her by my mother, "Lady Boothby, this is my boy!" "How wonderfully like his father!" and her ladyship inclined her lovely face and gave me a kiss. "Lucky fellow," said Webster, who was standing by; "you'll remember in after years that you've kissed Mrs. Nisbett!" "I've forgotten it already," I said, lifting up my face for a reminder. Mrs. Nisbett laughed and acceded; and Webster, turning to her so that my mother could not hear, muttered, "*Very* like his father."

My introduction to her.

There I first saw the Charles Keans in *The Wife's Secret*, one of the best acting plays of modern days, with Webster as the steward and Mrs. Keeley as the waiting-maid; in a most preposterous piece called *Leap Year*, in which Kean, the hero, to win his love, disguised himself as a footman in livery, and spouted Coleridge's "Geneviève;" and in Shakespeare. Webster, the manager, was the hero of *The Roused Lion*, in which a *beau* of the old school, roused into competition with a coxcomb of the new, exhibits in every point his superiority; of *Lavater;* and of *The Serious Family*, a rendering of *Le Mari à la Campagne*, which afterwards served

Comedies.

Mr. Burnand as the groundwork of his *Colonel*. The wife, in this piece, was played by Miss Reynolds, one of the most delightful actresses of our time, whether in comedy or, *teste The Invisible Prince*, in burlesque.

The Irish Major in *The Serious Family* was the famous James Wallack, in his day untouchable as a romantic actor, handsome, gallant, dashing, almost an English Fechter, without the fascinating earnestness in love-making, but with a strong dash of humour, which Fechter, on the stage, never showed. Wallack's Don Cæsar de Bazan was a splendid performance, so was his Brigand, and his Rover in *Wild Oats*. I have seen him attempt Othello with but a small amount of success, but he was a fair Iago and a most admirable Benedick. James Wallack.

Then there were the delightful Keeleys, with their combined efforts in such farces as *Dearest Elizabeth* and the *Pas de Fascination*, and Keeley's stolid comicality in such burlesques as *The Sphinx* and *Camaralzaman*, in which he had the assistance of Miss Reynolds's sweet voice and charming presence, and Mr. James Bland's magnificent pomposity. An actor of Irish characters named Hudson, gentlemanly, but of somewhat thin humour, was a light of the HAYMARKET in those days.

My earliest recollection of the LYCEUM is under the management of the Keeleys, when with their The Lyceum.

daughter Miss Mary Keeley, Miss Louisa Fairbrother (Mrs. Fitzgeorge), Miss Woolgar, Messrs. Emery, Wigan, Frank Matthews, Leigh Murray, Oxberry, and Collier. Those were the days of the dramatisation of Dickens's books: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with Keeley as Mrs. Gamp and his wife as Bailey, F. Matthews a wonderful Pecksniff, Emery an excellent Jonas; *The Cricket on the Hearth*, with Mrs. Keeley as Dot, Keeley as Caleb Plummer, Emery as Peerybingle, and Mary Keeley's *début* as Bertha; of the sparkling burlesques concocted by Albert Smith and Tom Taylor, while Charles Kenney would sit by and occasionally throw in a joke or a suggestion: *Aladdin*, where Keeley played the magician, and imparted such peculiar emphasis to the line, "Yes! here's the place, and there's the blasted cedar!" as to bring down the house; *Ali Baba*, with Miss Fairbrother as the leader of the Forty Thieves; *Valentine and Orson*, Mrs. Keeley as the Knight, her husband the Wild Man; and others. Shirley Brooks won his dramatic spurs here with an excellent melodrama, *The Creole*—the hero finely played by Emery, a most excellent actor, never sufficiently appreciated—and a novel and sparkling farce, *The Wigwam*.

Dickens dramatised.

Burlesque.

When my regular playgoing days began, the LYCEUM had passed into the hands of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, who had a brilliant reign there. Their opening pieces fell flat, but within a few

The Vestris *régime*.

weeks two new farces were produced which filled the house and have proved perennial favourites: they were *Box and Cox* and *The Rough Diamond.* Buckstone and Harley were the original printer and hatter; but though every comedian for the last thirty-five years has played the farce, I have never seen so thoroughly artistic a conception of Box as that of Charles Mathews, who took the part when Harley left the theatre. Mrs. Fitzwilliam's Margery, in *The Rough Diamond*, has never been surpassed. Shirley Brooks was also successful here with a smart one-act comedy called *Anything for a Change*, with Charles Mathews and a Miss "Polly" Marshall, who played a servant-girl inimitably. And when my mother joined the company in 1848 there was a capital revival of *The Critic*, with her as Tilburina, Charles Mathews, Frank Matthews, Selby, Roxby, and F. Cooke.

My first appearance in public.

A farce called *An Appeal to the Public* was memorable to me, as in it I made my first appearance on any stage. A crowd was gathered under an archway in supposed shelter from rain: one night I "went on" and stood among the people; but Charles Mathews spying me, rushed up, exclaiming, "What! young Mr. Yates!" dragged me to the footlights, hoped I had not got wet, and dismissed me. This was the time when Planché, staunchest supporter of Madame Vestris, and founder of her

fortunes in her early managerial career at the OLYMPIC, again came to her help, and produced a series of extravaganzas, the most noteworthy of which were *The King of the Peacocks* and *The Island of Jewels*. These, with the scenery painted by William Beverly, then new to London and in the plenitude of his power, and admirably acted, proved highly attractive. They served to introduce two young actresses to the London stage, Miss Julia St. George and Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam. Both were successful, but Miss Fitzwilliam, daughter of an old public favourite, achieved quite an extraordinary success by her charming manner and most effective singing: she certainly did not "lag superfluous," as in the height of her triumph she married, and retired from the boards.

Planché's extravaganzas.

These, too, were the times of Charles Mathews's greatest successes: *The Day of Reckoning*, in which he for the first time attempted a serious character, the second being when he played in the dramatised version of my novel, *Black Sheep;* Blanchard Jerrold's admirable piece, *Cool as a Cucumber*, which, done into French, as *L'Anglais Timide*, was afterwards played by Mathews in Paris ; and, best of all, *The Game of Speculation*, adapted by G. H. Lewes, under the name of Slingsby Laurence, from *Mercadet*, possibly the most suitable character ever written for Charles Mathews, and in the acting of

Charles Mathews.

which he absolutely revelled. Much was expected from a drama which followed, *The Chain of Events;* but it was not successful, proving, as Douglas Jerrold said of it, "a door-chain, to keep people out of the house!"

The PRINCESS'S, at the time when I first knew it, and for many years after, was under the management of a Hebrew gentleman, whose name appeared at the head of his playbills as J. M. Maddox, and whose short stout figure and very marked features, with a cigar always protruding from under his prominent nose, was a constant source of delight to the caricaturists. His real cognomen was, I imagine, Medex—at least that was the name painted over a tobacconist's shop immediately facing the theatre, which was avowedly kept by the lessee's brother, and there, seated on a tub or lounging against the counter, Mr. Maddox was constantly to be found. And not merely to the caricaturist, but to the anecdote-monger, was the Hebrew *impresario* of much service. Stories of his wonderful fertility of resource in saving money were rife in theatrical circles. Among other things, it was said that all the lighter pieces produced at the PRINCESS'S were the work of a jobbing author, who was kept on the premises—some said chained by the leg to his desk—who for a small salary was compelled to produce two French translations weekly. Some of the stories were introduced by

Mr. Maddox.

His stock author.

Albert Smith into one of his novels, in which Maddox figured; and the manager took his revenge by getting the jobbing author to write a parody, satirising his assailant as "The Fine Young Modern Dramatist." It was rather smartly done, as may be judged from the one verse which lives in my memory:

His revenge.

"'Albata' Smith they've christened him, for wicked wags have said
That as Albata now is used for silver plate instead,
So he has stolen the genuine wit that's found in Dickens' head,
And for it substituted his own literary lead—
Like a fine young modern dramatist,
All of the present time."

All were theatrical fish that came to Mr. Maddox's net: opera, farce, tragedy, comedy, ballet, and pantomime, he tried them all. On my earliest visit to the Princess's I saw a little opera called *The Barcarole*, with a very sweet tenor named Allen, a well-known baritone, Leffler, and a man named Walton, whom I have never heard of since, but who remains in my memory from an odd trick of twiddling his thumbs, and the manner in which he repeated a name, "Cafferini." I saw soon after, Mrs. Butler, now known as Mrs. Fanny Kemble, as Julia in *The Hunchback*, and conceived, rightly or wrongly, a dislike to her acting. Here, too, I had my one remembered experience of Macready—I know my father took me as a child to Covent Garden to see *Macbeth*, but that is wholly indistinct—as *Othello*,

The Princess's.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler.

but I was not much impressed. Miss Cushman, whom I was to meet twenty-five years later in America, was the Emilia, and every one was talking of the extraordinary resemblance in face, voice, and manner between the two. Mr. Maddox relied greatly on the attraction of operas in English, and brought out several stars of a certain magnitude: a Mdlle. Nau was the first *prima donna* of my recollection; but there were also the charming Madame Anna Thillon, whose performance in the *Crown Diamonds* created a furore about this time, and young Miss Louisa Pyne, then a *débutante*. Mr. Harrison, afterwards to be associated with her in operatic management, and Mr. and Mrs. Weiss were stars among the company. Charles Mathews and his wife, Keeley and his wife, and Alfred Wigan were occasional visitors in those times to the PRINCESS'S, which, for its pantomime season, had the advantage of an extremely agile—but to me wholly unhumorous—clown, named Flexmore, who, with his wife, Mdlle. Auriol, daughter of another famous clown, proved highly attractive.

Stars at the Princess's.

And here, too, under the Maddox *régime*, was a very strange man, Charles Kerrison Sala, brother of the author, largely endowed with the family talent, and with more than an average supply of the family eccentricity. One of his peculiarities, and one which he carried out with the strictest rigour,

Charles Kerrison Sala.

was never to be seen in public without a flower in his button-hole ; winter or summer, night or day, there was the flower, valuable or valueless, but always present. To the general public he was little known, though, under his theatrical name of Wynn, he achieved a certain amount of success at the PRINCESS'S; but his quaint fancy and keen perception of the ludicrous were highly esteemed by his friends. He wrote a queer rambling poem called "The Fish," which was full of sparkling incongruity. But it is as the hero of two or three stock satirical anecdotes that his memory will probably survive. One of these may be narrated. For some reason or other, Sala (Wynn) was most objectionable to Macready. Possibly want of reverence had something to do with the feeling; but the fact was that the great tragedian detested the eccentric actor. When at rehearsals Wynn appeared on the stage, Macready's eyes were tightly closed until he disappeared, when he would ask the prompter, "Has it gone?" Now, it happened that on the revival of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, with Macready as Cardinal Wolsey, the part of Cardinal Campeius was allotted to Mr. Wynn. It had been represented to the manager that Mr. Macready's costume would be correct and splendid, more especially as regards some magnificent point-lace which he intended wearing, and it had been suggested that something extra should be done to make the other Cardinal

Macready's hatred of him.

Cardinal Campeius.

respectable. But Mr. Maddox thought some old scarlet robes fudged up from the wardrobe would suffice; and as to point-lace, silver tissue-paper, deftly snipped and sewn on, would have much the same appearance when viewed from a distance. At the dress rehearsal Macready, enthroned in a chair of state, had the various characters to pass before him: he bore all calmly until, clad in the scarlet robes bordered by silver tissue-paper, and wearing an enormous red hat, Wynn approached. Then, clutching both arms of his chair and closing his eyes, the great tragedian gasped out, "Mother Shipton, by ——!"

The Adelphi.

Of course I was on the free list at the ADELPHI, where I not merely had the right of *entrée*, but generally managed to get passed into one of the small low private boxes immediately above the orchestra—I am speaking of the old house—where my presence frequently produced, to my intense delight, a more or less apposite remark from Wright, the low comedian. *The* low comedian, indeed, for never have I seen such a laughter-compelling creature: face, figure, manner, were irresistible; without uttering a word he would, across the footlights, give the audience a confidential wink, and send them into convulsions. In words and actions he was broad, sometimes to the verge of indecency, and to this baseness he was encouraged by a large portion of the audience; but when he chose

Wright.

there was no more genuinely and legitimately comic artist. He was essentially an Adelphi actor: made no mark before he came there, subsided into nothingness after he left. Wright first joined the Adelphi company in my father's management, played Dick Swiveller in the *Curiosity Shop*, Shotbolt the gaoler in *Jack Sheppard*, and gradually worked himself into prominence; but it was not until after my father's death, and under Mr. Webster's rule, that he assumed the position which he held so long. For many years he was the undoubted attraction to the theatre, and was paid and treated accordingly. Never have I heard such laughter as that which he evoked, never have I seen people so completely collapsed and exhausted by the mere effect of their mirth. In some of Wright's scenes in *The Green Bushes* I have fallen helpless, spineless, across the front of the box, almost sick with laughter. In this drama and *The Flowers of the Forest*, in his broad farces, *Did you ever Send your Wife to Camberwell? How to Settle Accounts with your Laundress*, and others of that calibre; he was riotously, preposterously, madly absurd; but there were other pieces I shall have to speak of, wherein he played with all the subtle resources of which the art is capable, and where it would have been impossible to have exceeded the real merit of his impersonation.

His comic powers.

Unlike his dramatic rivals, Keeley and Buck-

stone, both of whom were men of natural smartness and cleverness enhanced by education, Wright, save in his profession, was stupid, coarse, ignorant, and essentially common; undoubtedly, too, he was most at his ease when the scene admitted and the audience permitted his display of his coarseness and commonness on the stage; but he could rise to great artistic heights. Constantly associated with him on the stage, half-feeder, half-butt, was Mr. Paul Bedford, always in my time a big, jovial, red-faced, mellow-voiced, brainless comedian, but whom my mother remembered as a good-looking young man, a sweet tenor singer. Paul Bedford's size and rotundity, his odd utterances of slang sayings, his stolid imperviousness to the impertinence with which in the due course of all the dramas he was assailed by Wright, made him a favourite with the Adelphi public, and gave him a *raison d'être*. Had he lived later he would have been well placed in a music-hall, on the platform or in the chair. He had not the slightest claim to be considered an actor, played every part in exactly the same fashion, had not the faintest notion of impersonation, and was fundamentally stupid and ignorant. But in his earlier days he sang "Jolly Nose," and in later years he said "I believe you, my boy!" and these accomplishments, with his reputed jollity, his social reputation for full-flavoured anecdotes, and his position as Wright's

Paul Bedford.

professional butt, carried him successfully through a long life.

The entertainment provided at the ADELPHI scarcely ever varied : it commenced at seven o'clock with a melodrama in three acts, which was over before ten, after which there were a couple of farces. About nine, or as soon after as could be managed without too much disturbing the performance, the "half-price" was admitted—that is to say, a considerable reduction was accepted in the entrance-fee to the boxes and pit. In small theatres the half-price was a very important consideration to the management; for money was not so rife in those days, and there were numberless young men who, while they would have been bored by spending the entire evening in the theatre, and would have grudged a large disbursement for a comparatively short amusement, were willing to pay the reduced price; so that though the drama was the staple portion of the entertainment, the supplementary farces were no mere affairs to fill up the bill, but had their own value and their own audience. The two most successful dramas of that time were *The Green Bushes* and *The Flowers of the Forest*, and both were written by Buckstone, who had succeeded so well in suiting my father and *his* ADELPHI company with dramas similar in style. Of that company there still remained, in 1847, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, my mother, Wright, P. Bedford, O. Smith,

Half-price.

Buckstone's dramas.

and Cullenford, the original Ralph Nickleby. They were supplemented by Miss Woolgar, a most charming and fascinating young lady, who soon became a great favourite; Charles Selby, a better dramatist than actor; Hughes, who was said to have somewhat resembled my father in his style; Lambert, "first old man;" Munyard, a very excellent second low comedian, who died young; Miss Ellen Chaplin; and Miss Emma Harding, who somewhat recently returned to London after a long absence in America, appearing as a spiritualistic medium.

Mr. Webster, busied as manager and actor at the Haymarket, had not much time to give to his new property; so he had installed Madame Celeste as his stage-directress, while what is known in theatrical parlance as "the front of the house" —*i.e.* supervision of the box-office, money-takers, check-takers, playbills, treasury, &c.—was confided to my father's old friend and my guardian, Mr. Charles Manby, who, though entirely unconnected by birth and position—he was secretary of the Institute of Civil Engineers—with theatrical matters, seems to have always been mixed up in them. Celeste Elliott, popularly known as Madame Celeste, was a very extraordinary woman. Born in France, sent to America, married there, when quite young, to a man named Elliott—she arrived in this country a pantomimist and dancer by profession; and

Madame Celeste.

played in a piece, in which she had no word to utter, called *The French Spy*. To the day of her death, only a year or two ago, her English was not merely broken, it was smashed into fragments; but by mere force of will and great popularity she for years caused herself to be accepted as an English-speaking actress, and to play the heroines in a London theatre. Early in life she obtained a great influence over Benjamin Webster, which, during all the long years of its duration, was never exercised, I believe, save for his good. Full of natural energy and resource, full of French excitement and *élan*, knowing all the "inside life" of her profession as one who has lived in it from childhood only can, of indomitable will and untiring working-power, she made a most admirable head of the ADELPHI establishment, which, under her direction, flourished abundantly.

Adelphi farces.

Besides the Buckstone dramas which I have mentioned, "a real Adelphi success," as it used to be called on the bills, was achieved by *Title Deeds*, a play written by Mr. R. B. Peake, who had scored previous successes, and of whom Shirley Brooks used to tell a ridiculous *non sequitur* story: "Who do you say is the author of this farce?" asked an elderly playgoer; "Dicky Peake? Damned nonsense! he couldn't write a farce! *I knew his father!*"—by *The Harvest Home* and *The Hop-pickers*, by Mr. Parry; and by a version of the *Closerie des Genêts*, called *The*

Willow Copse, in which Mr. Webster played with great effect. The extraordinarily attractive farces of *Did you ever Send your Wife to Camberwell? How to Settle Accounts with your Laundress*, &c., were the work of J. Stirling Coyne, an indefatigable Irishman, who, by the aid of a French dictionary, and a knowledge of the requirements of the stage and the tastes of a London audience, for a series of years provided managers with dramatic wares, more or less good, but nearly always popular. His broad farces, full of quaint verbal and practical jokes, were, taken for what they were, very amusing. Better and higher work was done by Mark Lemon in *Domestic Economy* and *The School for Tigers*, in each of which farces Wright was provided with a fresh, thoughtful, natural bit of character, worked out by him with inimitable result. On these two farces, and another called *Who Lives at Number Nine?* and on his performance of Paul Pry, Wright's fame as a genuine comic actor will rest. Will rest, I say, forgetting that he is already forgotten! In those days the little ADELPHI was a popular and well-managed resort, its company was united, and there was a good deal of quiet fun and pleasant talk in the small and dingy green-room, hung round with portraits of the principal members. To me it was fairyland, and the memory of it is yet fresh in my mind.

The green-room.

I think it was to the old OLYMPIC that I was

The Olympic. taken as a child by my father to see a strange man named George Wild in a strange piece called *The Artful Dodge*. It was either there or at the QUEEN'S, a dingy place off Tottenham Court Road, where, long before it was metamorphosed by Miss Marie Wilton into the PRINCE OF WALES'S, I saw, in company with Dickens, a piece in which the First Napoleon reviewed the French army, consisting of three dirty youths and a vivandière, who, on the general's approach, presented arms, and saluted him with "Vive Emproo!" Certainly, I have no remembrance of the OLYMPIC in its palmy days of Vestris and Planché: my first regular recollection is of going there to the pit, to see a man who had taken the town by storm as Othello.

G. V. Brooke. Gustavus Vaughan Brooke was his name, and he remains in my memory as the best representative of the character I have ever seen: manly, soldierly, with all Salvini's gallantry and pathos, without a

His success. suggestion of Salvini's répulsive violence, with a voice now capable of the softest modulation in love or pity, now trumpet-toned in command—such was G. V. Brooke when I first saw him. He soon dropped away, poor fellow!—became a heavy drinker, of stout and porter mostly, and lost his gallant bearing, and his voice grew thick and muddy; and, though he played for years afterwards—he went down

His death. in the London, a ship which foundered in the Bay of Biscay on her way to Australia, and when last seen,

after most strenuous exertions at the pumps, was leaning over the bulwarks, calmly awaiting his coming doom—he was virtually a lost man in his first season. Soon after his appearance I took my mother to see him, and she, with all her experience, was very much impressed by his powers. As for me, I was infatuated, haunted the theatre, and saw Brooke in all his characters — saw him in Sir Giles Overreach, where, in the last act, he was splendid; saw him in Hamlet, where, throughout, he must have been very bad.

I am not quite certain as to the way in which *Othello* was cast, but I think Stuart, known as the "caged lion," a fine old-crusted actor, full of mouthings and conventionalisms, was the Iago, and Stuart's daughter the Desdemona; and I have an idea of having seen Miss Glyn, afterwards a celebrated tragic actress, as Emilia. Leigh Murray was, I suppose, the Cassio: I know he was in the company, for he often used to talk to me of Brooke and bemoan his failings, with little idea, poor fellow! that he himself, a few years after, would fall into a worse state. Later on was produced a play called *The Headsman*, in which Leigh Murray played the *jeune premier*, and first attracted to himself the admiring attention of the public. It was from the pit of the old OLYMPIC, entrance to which I had cheerfully purchased for eighteenpence, that I became desperately enamoured

Leigh Murray.

Mrs. Stirling.

of Mrs. Stirling, whose acquaintance I did not make for many years after, but whom I then worshipped with all the loyal devotion of seventeen. She was charming in everything; but in a little piece called *Time Tries All*, in which Leigh Murray also appeared, and where she spoke a smart epilogue, which I always used to consider specially addressed to me, she was more than delightful. In *The Eton Boy*, also with Leigh Murray, and with the mirthful addition of Compton, driest of comedians, in *Cousin Cherry*, and in many another little drama of that day, she won my youthful heart, which she has, naturally, retained ever since.

Lysander Thompson

At the old OLYMPIC I saw a very clever man, named Lysander Thompson, in a kind of character—a rustic full-flavoured Englishman, *e.g.* Tiger in *The School for Reform*, such as was played by the elder Emery—that was very popular early in the century, but which has quite died out. I imagine Mr. Lysander Thompson was practically its last exponent. I saw him play Zekiel Homespun in *The Heir-at-Law*, but cannot remember one other person in the cast. But I perfectly well recollect the destruction by fire of the old theatre and the opening of the new one; for by that time, 1849, I was a member of the Garrick Club, and moving in "theatrical circles." The fire took place on the night when a small actor named Bender was about to take his benefit; and the new house,

then thought remarkably pretty and commodious, was opened on one of the last nights of the year with a very strong company, among them Frank Matthews, Alfred Wigan, Compton, Meadows, Ryder, Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. A. Wigan, Mrs. Mowatt, Mr. Davenport, and Miss M. Oliver. The three last-mentioned artists came from the MARYLEBONE, where they had been playing under the management of Mr. Walter Watts, under whose auspices the new OLYMPIC had been built, and was to be managed.

Mr. Walter Watts.

Who was Mr. Walter Watts? Personally, a cheery, light-whiskered, pleasant little man, of convivial and champagne-supper-giving tendencies. *What* was he? Actors in those days were, as a rule, not very clear about business matters: they knew he was not an actor; they thought he was "something in the City." He was an excellent paymaster, very hospitable to all authors and critics, drove in a handsome brougham, and made elegant presents to the "leading ladies," whom he admired. "Something in the City," it was opined, must be a good berth. The position which Walter Watts really occupied in the City was that of a clerk in the Globe Insurance Office at a comparatively small salary, and the money on which he had lived in luxury and carried out his theatrical speculations was obtained by fraud. By ingenious alterations in the pass-books and ledgers, aided, one would imagine, by gross carelessness on the part of

His frauds

responsible officials, Watts, when discovered and arrested in April 1850, had robbed his employers of upwards of 70,000*l.* There was some technical legal difficulty in framing the indictment against him, and he was actually convicted of stealing "a piece of paper." A point of law was reserved, but afterwards given against him; he was sentenced to ten years' transportation, but committed suicide the same night by hanging himself to the grating of his cell. He was the precursor of Robson and Redpath, both of whom swindled in a somewhat similar way, and on a similar gigantic scale.

His suicide.

In my early recollection the ST. JAMES'S was in the occupation of Mr. John Mitchell, the Bond Street librarian, and was devoted to the production of French plays by French actors. Through the interest of my guardian, Charles Manby, I had the *entrée* of the house, and constantly availed myself of the privilege. There I saw with special interest—for I had heard of a certain resemblance between him and my father—Frédéric Lemaître, even then no longer young, but full of vivacity and fire, with his high-pitched voice and odd distorted mouth, deeply impressive in *Le Docteur Noir*, delightfully comic in *L'Auberge des Adrets.* I have seen Lemaître in some of his best characters—in the *Trente Ans de la Vie d'un Joueur*, where his wonderful performance forms the subject of one of Dickens's letters; years after-

The St. James's.

Lemaître.

wards in *Paillasse*, a personation of great pathos; and in *Ruy Blas*, where his age and physical disadvantages were counterbalanced by his genius. There, too, I saw Regnier, the first comedian of the Théâtre Français; and Lafont, who lived to be a great age, and looked and played inimitably to the last; and fascinating Mdlle. Rose Chéri, and Bouffé, a kind of refined Wright, in the *Gamin de Paris*. At the ST. JAMES'S I first became intimate with the late Charles Lamb Kenney, who in those days was assisting John Oxenford in the dramatic criticism of the *Times*, and who used to give me a seat in his box, where I passed the evening listening to his remarks on the play, and envying the lucky mortal who had sufficient talent to write in a newspaper! It was from the *Times* box that I first saw Rachel, by far the finest actress I have ever seen. Her Camille in *Les Horaces*, her Phèdre, her Adrienne Lecouvreur, are as fresh in my memory as when I first saw them; and there was another play—was it called *Valérie?*—in which she sustained a double character. They talked of Ristori; they talk of Sarah Bernhardt: I have seen them both in their best *rôles*, but, to my mind, neither one nor the other is to be compared to Rachel.

Bouffé.

C. L. Kenney.

Rachel.

My first visit to the STRAND was in very early days, when it was called "Punch's Playhouse," and the Keeleys were acting there; but beyond those facts I have no recollection of it. What I first

clearly remember in connection with the little theatre is a dramatic version of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with a clever jolly-looking man named H. Hall, who "doubled" the characters of Pecksniff and Mrs. Gamp, and one Roberts, who made an excellent Tigg. Then I knew no more of it until it was in the hands of old William Farren, who, as an actor of old men, I have never seen surpassed on any stage. He had an excellent company—Mrs. Glover, who enjoyed great celebrity as an actress of old women; Mrs. Stirling, Compton, and Leigh Murray. For them Mark Lemon wrote an admirable drama called *Hearts are Trumps*, in which all were very well suited, and where Leigh Murray, who played an aristocratic villain, for the first time dared to represent a comparatively young man with gray hair, being made up, in fact, after the well-known "Jim" Macdonald. A version of *The Vicar of Wakefield* was also very successful; and a little comedy called *Poor Cousin Walter* was, I think, one of the earliest dramatic productions of my old friend Palgrave Simpson.

Old William Farren.

Mrs. Glover.

I am afraid my youthful admiration of Shakespeare and the legitimate drama was not sufficiently strong to carry me often to the remote regions of SADLER'S WELLS, a theatre which the pluck and energy of worthy Mr. Phelps had rescued from the lowest condition of a "penny gaff," and where the

best plays were then presented in a fitting manner; but I well recollect seeing a performance of *The Tempest*, in which I was struck not so much by the manager's Prospero as by the Caliban of Mr. George Bennett, which remains on my mind as a very grim fantastic impersonation. Nor did I much affect the MARYLEBONE while under Mrs. Warner's management, though I once went there to see the *Winter's Tale*. Later on, when the theatre passed into the hands of the peccant Watts, who leased it before he took the OLYMPIC, I was a more frequent visitor. For there was first introduced to an English public the fascinating Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt, an American actress, who was also a poetess and a very charming woman. With her was her compatriot, Mr. E. L. Davenport, who not merely played Shakespearean and other heroes, but actually dared to appear as a British sailor—William in *Black-eyed Susan*, a character created by the great "Tippy" Cooke. Mrs. Mowatt and Mr. Davenport were very popular, both here and at the OLYMPIC.

Mr. George Bennett.

Mrs. Mowatt.

My reminiscences of the SURREY are a little mixed. I went there first when my father was playing a short summer engagement under Mr. Davidge's management. And my mother, in later years, used to speak of another engagement which they played at the SURREY, under the auspices of a Mr. Levi. This gentleman, it seems, one day asked

my father what piece he proposed to produce next, and my father mentioning *The Admirable Crichton*, a version of Ainsworth's novel, which had been successful at the ADELPHI, Mr. Levi said, "That's a capital notion, *The Admiral Crichton;* and we've something in the wardrobe that'll just do for it! Jones, step up to the wardrobe, and fetch that admiral's uniform I bought last week!" When I visited the SURREY as a young man it was under the joint management of Mr. Shepherd and Miss Vincent, "the acknowledged heroine of domestic drama," as she used to be called in the bills, a lady whose great part was Susan Hopley, a virtuous servant-maid. On my being presented as the son of the late, &c., to Mr. Shepherd, that gentleman affably remarked, "O, indeed! glad to know you, sir! *Did your father leave your mother pretty well off?*"

The Admiral Crichton.

Mr. Shepherd's delicacy.

These are my reminiscences of the theatres of my youth, where some of my happiest hours were passed. I am not so much of a theatre-goer now, but I should be ungrateful indeed if I had aught but the kindliest feelings for the "player-folk," from whom I sprang, among whom I lived, and from whom I have received constant sympathy and consideration.

Photogravure Goupil & Cie

ELIZABETH BRUNTON.

(1822)

From a miniature by Stumpf

London, Richard Bentley & Son, 1884

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFLUENCE OF "PENDENNIS."

1851—1853.

I AM afraid that my mother was a good deal disappointed at the non-fulfilment of the dream which she had imagined would be accomplished when I returned from Germany—a dream in which all the leisure portion of my life was to be passed in her company, and in improving my mind and making myself famous in some line not quite decided upon. She had plenty of sound common sense, and ought to have known the proneness of youth to give way to the temptations with which it is surrounded; but she seemed to have an idea that her one duckling was to be different from the rest of the brood; and when she found him perpetually immersed in the pond of pleasure, and never tired of diving down, loudly quacking his delight, upon any inducement to do so, she felt that the one hope of her later life was not destined to be realised.

My mother's disappointment.

Her reproaches were not very many, and certainly not very bitter. It had always been her desire that I should do something to distinguish myself in some profession—at the Bar, she had hoped; and when

circumstances proved that such a career was impossible, she had accepted Lord Clanricarde's appointment with special gratitude, knowing as she did that the holding of a Government situation was by no means incompatible with other employment—literary, for instance. Look at Charles Lamb in the India House; and there was Mr. Sam Anderson, an old friend of my father's, who was Registrar of something in Chancery Lane, and who had known Sir Walter Scott, and written some convivial songs, and been introduced into Christopher North's *Noctes Ambrosianæ* under another name. Thus my dear mother, who always laughingly declared there was a great deal of Mrs. Nickleby in her, would prattle on, particularly lamenting that, on the rare occasions when I passed an evening at home, and invariably passed it in reading, I should indulge in the perusal of such very light literature, instead of devoting myself to the acquisition of a store of valuable information.

Government service not incompatible with literary career.

She had read somewhere that Sir Walter Scott had said the curse of his life had been his "desultory reading." I cannot tell whence she obtained this remarkable declaration. I have never found it in Lockhart's Life; and it seems exactly the opposite of what Scott would have said, and what must have been the truth. But that was my mother's text, and on it she preached many a simple sermon. Very different in her treatment of the same subject was

Desultory reading.

my godmother, a worthy old spinster lady whom I have mentioned as living with us. "What with his *Pickwick* and his *Punch*"—these were the works always selected as typical of my studies—she would remark, with great asperity, "I wonder the boy hasn't softening of the brain! I'm only sorry my uncle Beilby is not alive to give him a good talking to!" "My uncle Beilby," who figured perpetually in the old lady's conversation under this guise or as "the dear Bishop," was Dr. Beilby Porteous, a former diocesan of London, whose portrait hung on our dining-room wall, and whose name was to me *anathema maranatha* from the manner in which it was always being held up to me as precept and example.

What "the dear Bishop" would have said to it.

Although the pursuit of pleasure was at that time my most chosen avocation, and although both *Pickwick* and *Punch* had a full share of my admiration, the old lady's sarcastic condemnation of my literary tastes was far too sweeping. I had become John Baker's pupil then, and was well grounded in English poetry and standard prose. In those days Macaulay's History was creating much excitement and discussion, and I had brought it back from one of my visits to the Continent in, I am ashamed to say, a Tauchnitz edition, and was completely fascinated by its brilliancy. And just about then appeared the first numbers of *Household Words*, which I devoured with extreme eagerness, and the early volumes of which

I study Macaulay.

And *Household Words*.

still appear to me, after a tolerably wide experience of such matters, to be perfect models of what a magazine intended for general reading should be. In them, besides the admirable work done by Dickens himself—and he never was better than in his concentrated essays—there were the dawning genius of Sala, which had for me a peculiar fascination; the novels of Mrs. Gaskell; the antiquarian lore of Peter Cunningham and Charles Knight; the trenchant criticism of Forster; the first-fruits of Wilkie Collins's unrivalled plot-weaving; the descriptive powers of R. H. Horne, who as a prose-writer was terse and practical; the poetic pathos of Adelaide Procter; the Parisian sketches of Blanchard Jerrold; the singularly original "Roving Englishman" series of Grenville Murray; the odd humour of Henry Spicer.

The *Man in the Moon.*

Only vaguely in those days had I heard of these delightful beings; but of the writers engaged on the *Man in the Moon*, a humorous illustrated monthly periodical then appearing under the acknowledged editorship of Albert Smith and Angus Reach, I had somewhat more direct knowledge. I had seen Charles Kenney at the French plays talking to an earnest-faced long-haired young man whom he called Angus Reach; and at the house of some friends I had met a delightful old lady whom they and every one addressed as "Aunt Sally," and who was actually the live aunt of that rollicking *littérateur*, Albert

Smith, and dwelt in her nephew's cottage in that very village of Chertsey about which he was always writing. "Aunt Sally" was not the rose, but she had lived very close to it, and I venerated her accordingly.

What an existence was that led by those men! To write, and to publish what you wrote, and to be paid for writing it! The theatrical critics, too, with free *entrée* everywhere, and wielding such enormous power! I knew them all by sight, and used to sit gaping at them with wonder and admiration. John Oxenford of the *Times*, enthroned in a box; David Hastings for the *Herald;* Reach, and sometimes Shirley Brooks, for the *Chronicle;* Howard Glover for the *Morning Post;* Heraud, the long-haired epic poet, for the *Athenæum;* Stirling Coyne for the *Sunday Times;* and Bayle Bernard for the *Weekly Dispatch.* The two last I knew personally, as they had been writers for the Adelphi in my father's time, and I soon made acquaintance with the others. And the more I saw of them, the more I envied them, and the stronger grew my desire to enter myself of their craft. It was a most pleasant way, and the only way which occurred to me, of gratifying two strong aspirations—to make myself a name of some kind, and to earn some money in addition to my official salary. I wanted to be something more than a clerk in the Post Office, to be known as something else than the

The theatrical critics.

Longings for fame —and money.

everlasting "son of—Adelphi, you know." And though I have often been told, and though I believe, that I should have done very well as an actor, having some mimetic faculty and dramatic power of narration, I never contemplated an appearance on the stage.

To get admitted into the ranks of literary men, among whom I might possibly, by industry and perseverance, rise to some position, began to be my constant thought; and I was encouraged in the hope that I might succeed, perhaps more than anything else, by reading the career of *Pendennis*, which, in its well-remembered yellow cover, had then been appearing month by month for the last two years, and in its complete form was just obtainable at the libraries. There is no prose story in our English language, not even the *Christmas Carol*, not even *The Newcomes*, not even the *Scenes of Clerical Life* or *Silas Marner*—and now I have named what are to me the most precious—which interests and affects me like *Pendennis*. It had this effect from the very first. I knew most of it so thoroughly. The scenes in the provincial theatre—the Fotheringay, her father, the prompter, the company—were such perfect creations (to this day I have never seen any hint as to where Thackeray got his study of these people, who were quite out of his usual line); the position of Pendennis and his mother was so analogous to that of

I read *Pendennis*

me and mine—her devotion, his extravagance; the fact that I was personally acquainted with Andrew Arcedeckne, the original of Foker, in whom he was reproduced in the most ludicrously lifelike manner: all this awakened in me a special interest in the book; and when, in the course of Pen's fortunes, he enters upon the literary career, writes his verses for the *Spring Annual*, dines with Bungay, visits Shandon, is engaged on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and chums with Warrington, who makes that ever-to-be-quoted speech about the power of the press: "Look at that, Pen! There she is, the great engine; she never sleeps," &c.—when I came to this portion of the book my fate was sealed. To be a member of that wonderful Corporation of the Goosequill, to be recognised as such, to be one of those jolly fellows who earned money and fame, as I thought, so easily and so pleasantly, was the one desire of my life; and, if zeal and application could do it, I determined that my desire should be gratified.

My fate is sealed.

But, as I have since had occasion to point out to many scores of eager neophytes, the literary profession is the very one in which, though zeal and application are afterwards of great assistance, they are not the be-all and end-all: something more is absolutely requisite at the outset. It is of no use, as John Oxenford used to say, looking over his spectacles in his inimitably dry sententious way—

Mere business aptitude not enough.

"It's of no use printing in italics if you've got no ink;" and it certainly is of no use being remarkably practical and business-like in literature if you have no ideas to express. I had, or thought I had, ideas about certain small matters, but how to express them, and where to find the opportunity for such expression, was the difficulty. I had written tolerable verses at school, and had continued the practice, off and on. I felt sure, though I had never attempted it, that I could describe a play and fairly criticise the acting; equally, I could review a novel or a book of travel; and could, I thought, narrate any personal experience which might be worth recording. But how, and when, and where? The desire for some such outlet was becoming overwhelming, and was making me positively ill. Thus, then, my Muse laboured, and thus, at last, was she delivered.

Composition in church.

It was, I grieve to say, in church, in St. John's Wood Chapel, facing down the Park Road, and well known to all frequenters of Lord's. We had a pew there, and my mother was a very regular attendant. The incumbent was a most excellent but rather dry and prosy old gentleman, a Scotchman named Wharton; and one Sunday morning, while he was holding forth, my thoughts wandered away to the frontispiece of a book I had read in my boyhood, called *Lives of the Brigands*, or some such title, by a man named, I think, Macfarlane. The frontispiece illustrated a

story in the book. On the death of a brigand chief, the command was claimed by a young fellow who had recently joined the band, but had always given evidence of cleverness and courage. The claim was allowed, provided he consented, as a proof of his devotion to the cause, to kill the girl to whom he was engaged, and to this suggestion he assented. Old Mr. Wharton boomed above me in his wooden box, and my thoughts began to work. It was a good subject. Pen's first printed verses were suggested by a picture. Could not I—? in the same metre, too. No need of much effort of memory to recall that—it was always in my mind:

> "Although I enter not,
> Yet round about the spot
> Sometimes I hover."

That was it. Now, let me see. "And, my dear braithren—" O dear, that will never do! We must shut Mr. Wharton more completely out of this affair. Now, let us suppose that the second in command addresses the candidate, and names the terms on which the band will elect him: "My dear brai-thren."

> "Thou hast claimed to be our chief,
> Thou art strong in thy belief
> Of thy powers:
> Thou boastest nerve and skill
> Enough to curb a will
> Such as ours!"

That stanza, and one or two more, were completed Poem in progress.

before the worthy old clergyman dismissed us. When I reached home I worked away at my subject, and that evening I read the verses to my mother, taking care not to wound her by telling her where the original conception had taken place. My dear critic's judgment was not blinded by her maternal love, but she thought the little poem good enough to pass muster in any magazine.

Then the question arose, Where to send it? Several periodicals were discussed and put aside as too grand, too important, too serious. Finally, we resolved that Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, the proprietor and editor of *Ainsworth's Magazine*, should be the favoured recipient. So I sent the verses, with a modest letter, explaining who I was, "the son of," &c., and anxiously waited the great man's reply. It came almost before I expected it, and it was delightful. Mr. Ainsworth had read the verses, and found them excellent; he was pleased to see that the son of his old friend was at an early age exhibiting talent, though in a different line from that in which his father had shone; he had great pleasure in accepting the poem, which would appear in an early number of the magazine. Meanwhile, a proof would be sent me.

Mr. Ainsworth accepts it.

There was joy in our little household that day: there was ecstasy two days later, when the proof arrived. I shall never forget that proof: it had

The proof.

a printed ticket stuck on to the left-hand corner, desiring that after it had been revised it should be sent to Mr. Somebody at Beaufort House, in the Strand. Save some small error in punctuation, there was nothing to correct; but I was not going to trust the precious paper to the post, in which it might have been delayed or lost; so I set off with it myself to Beaufort House, noticing as I passed down the Strand the name of "Warrington," a seal-engraver, over a shop-door, which, with my Pendennis worship, I took as a good omen. I found Messrs. Whiting's printing-office—I had plenty of experience of it afterwards, for it was there *All the Year Round* was printed, and it was burned down long ago; I found Mr. Somebody—the first printer, with the exception of the Fairbrothers in Bow Street, who did the theatrical-bill work, I had ever seen—in a long low room at the top of an enormous flight of stairs, and placed the proof in his hand. He was a fat little man, in black calico sleeves, and with a dirty white apron looped over his shoulders. He seemed rather surprised at my calling on him, but received me with a half-pitying smile: he could not say exactly when the verses would appear, but no doubt, as Mr. Ainsworth, according to what I had told him, had said it would be soon, why, it would be soon! That was all I could get from Mr. Somebody—but what did it matter? Was I not already "one of

The printer.

Ha! ha! them"? was there not work of mine actually in type? Let long-haired Reach and complacent Shirley Brooks look to themselves! I had started on my career, and ere long would come thundering up alongside them!

The verses about the brigands were not in the next number of *Ainsworth's Magazine*, at which I was surprised; nor in the one succeeding, at which I was indignant. I wrote a letter to Mr. Ainsworth, indeed I wrote many, ranging from the urgent appeal to the sarcastic invective: he replied to one, but wisely ignored the rest. And it may interest young authors, or would-be authors, to know that these celebrated verses never did appear in *Ainsworth's Magazine*, but saw the light a year or two afterwards in a *Keepsake*, when I was beginning to make my way along the thorny path. It is only two or three years ago that I told this story in the presence and to the great amusement of Mr. Ainsworth, with whom I had a pleasant acquaintance, at a banquet given in his honour at Manchester.

Indignation at delay.

About this time, towards the close of the year 1851, I made the personal acquaintance of Albert Smith, with whom I speedily contracted an intimate friendship, a friendship the warmth and closeness of which were not in the least affected by the fact that he was fifteen years my senior. I had met him twice previous to this. Early in '47, just after my appointment to the Post Office, and while I was still the

Albert Smith.

rawest of youths, my mother, with more affection than discretion, had asked for and obtained permission for me to accompany her to a dinner to which she had been invited by Mr. and Mrs. Horace Twiss, at their house in Park Place, St. James's Street. Mr. Twiss, who was connected with the Kemble family, was himself affiliated to journalism and literature—he was the first Parliamentary summary writer in the *Times*, and the author of the *Life of Lord Eldon*, and had been an old friend of my father's. The dinner was, oddly enough, given on the day of a "general fast," which had been solemnly fixed by proclamation of Parliament "on account of the grievous scarcity and dearth of divers articles of sustenance and necessaries of life." There was certainly no dearth of luxury at Horace Twiss's table—no dearth of wit around it. There was a large party, but I can only recollect the famous editor of the *Times*, John Delane, whose presence I had indeed forgotten, until he reminded me of it years after; Albert Smith; and Thomas Knox Holmes, who saw and pitied my "fish-out-of-water" condition in such a gathering—I was only sixteen—and took special pains to talk to me and set me at my ease. After dinner, Arthur Smith, M. Hallett, and others of their set came, and being joined by Albert, sang some of the Christy Minstrel airs just coming into vogue, the words having been parodied to apply to persons and matters of the day.

Dinner at Horace Twiss's.

Albert Smith had always a great admiration and regard for my mother, whom he met there for the first time, and said a few kind words to me on my introduction to him. Once afterwards I had met him in the green-room of the Adelphi. But we had never really known each other until one autumn night, when I found him dining late at the Garrick Club. When his dinner was over he sat down at my table, and talked so pleasantly that, instead of adjourning to the smoking-room—he was not a smoker—I remained with him. We commenced pacing the room side by side, up and down, and so we continued until nearly midnight. I do not know what we talked about—possibly I opened my heart to him, and told him how I envied and longed for a literary life—but then and there commenced a friendship which continued close and intimate, with but one small break, until his death nine years after; and to this friendship I owe much of my life's happiness, amongst other items of it my wife.

My talk with Albert Smith.

We swear friendship

At this time Albert Smith was desperately busy in the preparation of his new entertainment. In the previous August he had made an ascent of Mont Blanc, in those days a very rare feat; he had written an account of it in *Blackwood;* and, garnished with songs, "characters," and splendid illustrative views by William Beverly, it was to form the staple of a monologue to be given by him at the Egyptian Hall,

Mont Blanc entertainment.

the principal room of which he had just acquired, and which was being decorated for the purpose. He was not a novice at the work; two years previously he had made his first appearance before the public at Willis's Rooms, in an entertainment written by himself, called "The Overland Mail," descriptive of the route to India, relieved by sketches of character and "patter" songs, also illustrated by Mr. Beverly, whose fame was then dawning.

Albert's appearance.

Let me picture him as he was in those days when our intimacy commenced. A man of thirty-five years of age, with large head, large body, short legs; long hair, long reddish-brown beard and moustache, small keen deep-set gray eyes, good aquiline nose, small hands and feet; always badly dressed: when at home at work, he wore a short blue blouse, such as is to be seen on all the Swiss peasants, and an old pair of trousers; in the street he was given to gaudy neckerchiefs, and had a festoon of "charms" dangling from his watch-chain. He lived at No. 12 Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road, the drawing-room floor of which, and several of the bedrooms, were at the service of his parents, one aunt, and a sister, who were entirely dependent on him, and to whom he behaved with constant affection and liberality, while the ground-floor he kept to himself. The front dining-room was, save on the occasion of his not infrequent supper-

His home.

parties, but little used. The back-room was his sanctum, where he worked at a small carved-oak davenport, the facsimile of which has been in my possession for years. The room was lined with books, which also covered the floor, together with proof-sheets, prints, playbills, bits of tapestry or silk-stuff, and all kinds of literary litter. On the wall were an old clock which did not go, a water-colour picture of the Marquise de Brinvilliers hesitating between dagger or poison; on the door a framed engraving, after Horace Vernet, of the ghostly horseman in Bürger's *Lenore*, a ballad which Albert translated very successfully; one of the windows was fitted with an aquarium, a novelty in those days; on the broad mantelpiece, hung with faded stuff, was a figure of a Swiss peasant with a clock-face in his waistcoat; all kinds of small Swiss carved toys, Turkish slippers, Egyptian small idols, Danton's statuettes of Rubini and Lablache, Venetian glasses, goblets, and flagons—rare then, in the præ-Salviati period—a lady's black silk mask with a lace fall, an Italian stiletto, and an old Roman lamp. On a small table, under a glass shade, was a pair of female hands, beautifully modelled in wax, the originals being Lady Blessington's. In an old oak *armoire*, besides all kinds of rubbish, was a bottle of sherry, which was constantly being produced with the short invitation, "Have a drink?" one of the Venetian glasses being brought down for the purpose,

Contents of his study.

and duly wiped on the host's blouse or a convenient duster. In a case in the hall stood a skeleton, a memento of Albert's student-days at the Middlesex Hospital, which I have seen, after old Pagan fashion, propped in a chair at the supper-table, with a chaplet of flowers round its skull.

I have never met any man more thorough in his whole character, certainly no one more thorough in his likes and dislikes, than Albert Smith: from the moment he "took me up" he presented me, with glowing credentials, to his immediate set, and I was at once cordially received by them. Most prominent among them was his younger brother Arthur, a man full of cleverness of a quaint kind, of a remarkably sweet disposition and winning manner, and of, as was about to be proved, singular aptitude for business. He, too, had been a medical student, but up to this period had made no particular mark in life, the only incident in his career worth mention having been his marriage with an heiress; but he rose with the opportunity, and in the organisation of all the before-the-curtain arrangements of the Egyptian Hall undertaking—the most important provision for money-taking, check-taking, money-payments, bill-posting, advertising, the comfort of the audience, everything, in fact, save the actual delivery of the lecture and songs—he developed a special ability which I have never seen equalled. Albert Smith was never

Arthur Smith.

tired of acknowledging that a very large proportion of the extraordinary success attending his nine years' tenancy of the Egyptian Hall was due to his brother's unremitting care and attention; and Dickens, the first and second series of whose public readings he planned and superintended, had equal faith in his business talent, as well as a deep personal regard for him. "As for poor Arthur Smith," Dickens wrote to Forster, immediately after A. S.'s death in '61, "it is as if my right arm were gone."

His original fun.

Arthur was by no means "literary," had read very little and written nothing; but he had keen observation and was very suggestive. Much of Albert's successful fun had its origin in Arthur's droll ideas, and Albert used to say that Arthur's riddle, "What is marmalade?" the answer being a quotation from the description on the pot, "An excellent substitute for butter at breakfast," was entitled to rank among the best conundrums of the day. Arthur lived with his brother in Percy Street, and was with him almost every hour of the day; he received me at once into his regard, and thenceforth I was almost as intimate with him as with Albert. Just at this time I used to join them after leaving my office, generally finding them among the scaffolding and whitewash of the Egyptian Hall, then under process of alteration; then we would

adjourn to some cheap and quiet place for dinner, and spend the rest of the evening together.

Prominent among the intimates of both the brothers at that time was Joseph Hulme Robins, known to every one as "Joe Robins," also a quaint humourist, and in many respects a very entertaining fellow. Robins, who was a nephew of the well-known auctioneer, had been a fellow-student with Albert at the Middlesex Hospital, had accompanied him on his trip to the East, and on his return had become assistant to Dr. Beaman, of Covent Garden, whose daughter he afterwards married. One of his stories of this experience was that, it being considered right he should attend the funeral of an infant patient, he was walking up the churchyard of St. Paul's, his face in his handkerchief, when a boy who recognised him called out, "Who pisoned the babby?" and created much scandal. Coming into a legacy shortly after, Robins abandoned medicine, and put his money into a Manchester warehouse in the City; but he knew nothing of business, and soon lost his all. He then went on the stage, but the extraordinarily humorous perception and expression which characterised him in private deserted him completely in public, and he made little or no mark. He died a few years since, after a long illness. J. H. Robins.

At his best he was one of the funniest men I have

ever seen. He had a comic face with pendulous cheeks, and a stout figure, knew music, could sing fairly, and imitate excellently. He had several little scenes of his own arrangement, lasting two minutes, which were infinitely diverting: he would imitate an approaching train, the puffing of the engine, its going under an arch, its stopping—"Wolverton! Wolverton!" the descent of a passenger, the rush to the refreshment-room, demand of a cup of tea, agony at its heat, blowing it frantically, ringing of bell, whistle of engine, tea-consumer left behind! He would imitate the marching off of the band after trooping the colours, the tuning of the instruments in a theatrical orchestra and the remarks of the performers, an operatic scene between soprano, tenor, and bass, the feeding of the animals at the Zoo, rocket-time at Vauxhall, and a hundred other things. One of his favourite jokes was to rattle an enormous chain on the street-door in Percy Street, throwing it down and exclaiming melodramatically, "Friends to the prisoner!" He was thoroughly versed in the mysteries of pantomime lore, and it was to this, and to his personal qualifications, that he owed his selection to play Clown in the Amateur Pantomime, of which more anon.

His imitations.

With the Keeley family—Mr. and Mrs. Keeley and their two daughters, Mary and Louise—Albert Smith had a long-existent friendship. He had

The Keeleys.

written plays and burlesques for the Lyceum when under their management, and the elder daughter, who afterwards became his wife, had made her *début* in his version of *The Cricket on the Hearth*. For Robert Keeley's natural wit and shrewdness, and for his artistic impersonations, he had great admiration. I was speedily presented to the Keeleys—Mrs. Keeley had, of course, known me as a child—was made free of their house, and received from them constant kindness. They lived at that time at No. 19 Brompton Square, in that region which was once the chosen spot for theatrical tents to be pitched. Farrens, Keeleys, Buckstones, Wigans, and Miss Faucit have I known in Brompton Square; Planché in Michael's Grove; T. P. Cooke in Thurloe Square; Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris in Gore Lodge, Fulham; John Reeve and G. H. Rodwell in Brompton Row; Wright in Chelsea; Miss Woolgar—where she still lives—in the Vale, Chelsea. The omnibuses were filled with actors, and footlight celebrities were common as blackberries. Not many of them were to be met at the Keeleys', however, whose "connection" was strictly a private one, composed of many pleasant elements, young and old, which were generally brought together on a Sunday evening. In the week there was no time for festivity at No. 19, for rehearsals in the morning and acting at night kept the Keeleys constantly engaged, while

Actors in Brompton

the afternoon was rigidly devoted to purposes of rest, all callers being tabooed.

J. L. O'Beirne.

Another friend of Albert Smith's to whom I was presented, and who was good enough to admit me to an intimacy which was greatly to my advantage, was James Lyster O'Beirne, an Irishman but recently arrived in London, connected with the law and the press, and secretary of a public company. To Mr. O'Beirne I owe absolutely my first introduction to the public, my first actual acquaintance with the delightful mysteries of a printing-office, my first apprenticeship to journalism. Thus it came about: after reading some verses of mine, a little skit that had especial interest to him and Albert Smith, Mr. O'Beirne informed me that, amongst other press work, he edited the *Court Journal*, then the property of Mr. W. Thomas, a well-known newsagent in Catherine Street, Strand, and that, if I chose, he could, he thought, get me "on" to that organ. I need not say I accepted the offer with delight. I saw Mr. Thomas, and I was engaged at a salary of 1*l.* a week, very irregularly paid—hear this, all ye budding journalists!—to contribute regular dramatic criticisms, occasional poems, and anything else I liked to send in. My first poem —I have it before me at the present writing, duly cut out, and pasted in a book by my mother's proud care—was published in the *Court Journal* of the 6th

My first engagement.

The *Court Journal.*

March 1852, verses "On the Death of Thomas Moore," an event which had happened at the end of the previous month.

Pendennis at last!

So I was Pendennis at last! with my *entrée* to the theatres, and my power of saying what I liked about them, and my delightful visits to the printing-office, and my proofs, and my colloquies with my colleague, Mr. Lumley, now and for many years proprietor and editor of the *C. J.*, the circulation and influence of which he has enormously extended. James O'Beirne was very kind to me. I had the run of his chambers at the corner of King Street and St. James's Street, now a club, and the advantage of his advice and experience.

The Fielding Club.

Just about this time, too—the spring of 1852—was established the original Fielding Club, of which I was a constant attendant, and where I spent many happy hours and made many pleasant and useful acquaintances. It had a predecessor in the C.C.C., or Cider Cellar Club, held at the tavern of that name, in a room at the bottom of the stairs on the right, immediately facing the bar. I was there once or twice as a visitor, but was not a member: it was, in fact, before my time. The establishment of a night club—the "Fielding" was the name selected by Thackeray, to whom the choice of title was delegated—was decided on in consequence of the impossibility of getting supper at the Garrick, or, indeed, of

infusing anything like liveliness into that temple, after midnight. It was doubtless unreasonable to expect that the necessarily small staff of a small club should be ready both for day and night duties; but the want of such a place of resort had long been experienced, and it was determined it should be supplied in the best way possible. "Offley's," a famous tavern of former times, situate in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, had fallen upon evil days, its custom was gone, its name almost forgotten; the position for our purpose was most desirable, and the premises were secured for the Fielding.

I shall best give an idea of the members of this once famous club by quoting from a descriptive poem, written by Albert Smith, with a little of my collaboration, about the winter of '52. It was evoked by a little joke amongst ourselves at the expense of one of our members, which need not be recalled:

I.

There was high festival that night within Saint Offley's Hall
(For so they term a place where sons of night hold festival);
There was Sir Armytage[1] of race; and Archy[2] on the go
(He never stays long anywhere), and Albert[3] of the "show."

[1] Sir George Armytage, Bart., of Kirklees Hall, Yorks, and Cambridge Square, well known in social, turf, and theatrical circles; one of my oldest and kindest friends, and almost the only survivor, save the principals, of those present at my wedding.

[2] Andrew Arcedeckne, a quaint kind-hearted oddity, of whom I shall often have to speak. He was the original of Foker in *Pendennis*. *Dead.*

[3] Albert Smith. The Egyptian Hall entertainment was always spoken of by us as "the show." *Dead.*

II.

J. W. D.[4] was there, so great in operatic myth,
And using the club note-paper was Arthur, known as "Smith;"[5]
And with the Maelstrom's wind-borne spray still glistening in his hair,
The bold Norwegian fisherman, great Pleasant,[6] took his chair.

III.

And Dan,[7] who cried in quick, sharp tones, that never seemed to stop,
"Here! waiter! when the divil are ye going to bring my chop?"
And gentle Jim,[8] who tends the Screws, up fifty pairs of stairs,
And Collingwood,[9] who never goes to bed but unawares.

IV.

There was the gallant Henry,[10] and bold Brownlow[11] standing by,
Deep in a talk with the great MONS.[12] of Wagner and of Gye,

[4] J. W. Davison, for many years chief musical critic of the *Times*.

[5] Arthur Smith, Albert's brother. *Dead.*

[6] Sir Charles Taylor, Bart., of Hollycombe, and King Street, St. James's, who always rented a salmon-fishing in Norway. Called "Old Pleasant," from his invariable cynicism. Anthony Trollope has well described him: "A man rough of tongue, brusque in his manners, odious to those who dislike him, somewhat inclined to tyranny, he is the prince of friends, honest as the sun, and as open-handed as Charity itself." This, by the way, is an excellent description of the writer, Trollope himself. *Dead.*

[7] Daniel O'Connell, youngest son of the "Liberator," then M.P. for Tralee, now a Special Commissioner of Income-tax.

[8] James Lyster O'Beirne, the secretary of the General Screw Steam Shipping Company; frequently mentioned in these volumes.

[9] Henry Collingwood Ibbetson, a great friend of mine, and one of the gentlest and kindest of human beings. *Dead.*

[10] Sir Henry Percival de Bathe, Bart., then Captain de Bathe, of the Scots Fusilier Guards.

[11] Colonel Brownlow Knox, of the Scots Fusilier Guards, and M.P. for Marlow. He was pecuniarily interested at that time in the fortunes of the newly-established Royal Italian Opera. *Dead.*

[12] Mons. Jullien. See *ante*. *Dead.*

And good old Mac[13]—fair Strasburg's pride—who everybody knows,
And Vivian[14] of the flowing locks—so different to Joe's![15]

V.

There were four Williams there. First, he with voice of deepest might,[16]
Who says, "I'll tell you what it is" (and William tells you right);
And he of Willow-pattern fame,[17] who ne'er was known to shout;
And he the leading journal's pet—terror of Ingram's trout.[18]

VI.

And he, again, the bright-hued Artist-king of Fairyland;[19]
And with him was good brother Bob,[20] just come up from the Strand;
And Walter[21] the Enthusiastic spoke, with figures rare,
To FOW[22] of the "bright water jug"—he didn't use it there.

[13] Tom Macdonald, formerly of the *Morning Chronicle*, then secretary to the Canada Trust and Loan Company. The reference to Strasburg I have forgotten. A line in Thackeray's *Ballad of Bouillabaisse*, "And laughing Tom is laughing yet," referred to T. M. *Dead.*

[14] George Henry Lewes, at that time writing as "Vivian" in the *Leader*. *Dead.*

[15] J. M. Langford, Messrs. Blackwood's London representative. *Dead.*

[16] William Bolland, son of Mr. Justice Bolland, a big, heavy, handsome man, of much peculiar humour. He always spoke of himself as "William." He was the original of Fred Bayham in *The Newcomes;* and I ventured to reproduce him as William Bowker in *Land at Last*. *Dead.*

[17] William P. Hale, part-author with Frank Talfourd of the burlesque *The Willow Pattern Plate*. Often mentioned herein. He was a very loud talker. *Dead.*

[18] William Howard Russell, LL.D., the *doyen* of special correspondents. This was before he won his spurs in the Crimea; and then he was only known as a very clever graphic reporter and amusing Irish humourist. He was a great fisherman, and had the run of some water belonging to Mr. Ingram, M.P.

[19] William Beverly.

[20] Robert Roxby, then acting at the Lyceum. *Dead.*

[21] Walter Lacy, the evergreen dealer in tropes and metaphors.

[22] F. O. Ward, familiarly known as Fow. A very brilliant man, leader-writer on the *Times*, and a pioneer of sanitary reform. The "bright water-jug" was one of his special hobbies. *Dead.*

VII.

And Tom, whose pointed pen supplies the Stage and Board of Health,[23]
And Peter,[24] from whose handbook mines great Murray draws much wealth;
And Frank,[25] who made an awful pun, the whiles his grog he drank,
As Charley[26] told how Kean that day had called *him* also "frank."

VIII.

And Cuthbert of the ringlets came[27] (his namesake was not there,
With certain "cheerful snobs" that day he tasted City fare);[28]
And stout Sir Evan[29] shook his sides; with him the culprit's friend,
Who saves "the prisoner at the bar" from many an awkward end.[30]

IX.

And "handsome Jack," to whose dear girls and swells his life Punch owes;[31]
And Leigh, the sole *jeune premier* that our stage at present knows;[32]

[23] Tom Taylor, secretary of what was then the Board of Health, afterwards the Local Government Office. *Dead.*

[24] Peter Cunningham, F.S.A., author of the *Handbook of London*, &c. *Dead.*

[25] Frank Talfourd, an inveterate punster. *Dead.*

[26] Charles Lamb Kenney. He said one night at the Fielding, with an air of great simplicity, "I don't think I can have made myself agreeable this evening. I was dining with Charles Kean, who was in great force, and told some excellent stories; and I said, what a pity it was that he, who was such a capital fellow off the stage, should be such a bad actor!" "And what did Kean say?" we asked. "Well," said Kenney, "I don't think Kean liked it much; but all he said was, 'You are pleased to be frank this evening, Kenney.'" *Dead.*

[27] Cuthbert Ellison, barrister; afterwards a London police-magistrate. *Dead.*

[28] Captain Cuthbert Ellison, of the Grenadier Guards. *Dead.*

[29] Sir Evan Mackenzie, Bart. *Dead.*

[30] Either Serjeant Ballantine or Baron Huddleston. Both were members of the Fielding, and both at that time were often "special" at the Old Bailey.

[31] John Leech. *Dead.*

[32] Leigh Murray. *Dead.*

And he, the pride of that great Sunday print whose columns range
From vestries of St. Pancras to what "novel" is "or strange."[33]

X.

Another Arthur, too, of calm straightforward sense was there;[34]
And Tom, who licks the cabmen when they ask beyond their fare;[35]
And Tom again, whose soft dark curls the march of time disdain;[36]
And he who is so well beloved by Morris and Delane.[37]

XI.

The silver-toned snuff-taking Dick of some young beauty spoke;[38]
The excellent "*Chat Huant*" laughed—good audience for a joke[39]—
At something wicked Shirley said, who has so much to do[40]
(He writes the *Morning Chronicle* each day, the whole way through).

XII.

And Edmund was instructing all, how that the old C.C.,[41]
Transported for their crimes, were wrecked with rocks upon their lee;

[33] Thomas Behan, editor of the *Observer*. *Dead.*

[34] Arthur Pratt Barlow.

[35] Tom Buckland, nephew of the Dean of Westminster, and very handy with his fists. Now assistant editor of *Calcutta Englishman*.

[36] Thomas Knox Holmes.

[37] Thomas W. Bowlby, at that time a solicitor, and intimate friend of the gentlemen named. A particularly agreeable pleasant man. Mr. Bowlby afterwards, in the year '60, accompanied the allied English and French expedition against the Chinese, as representative of the *Times*; and being, with others, taken prisoner, was barbarously murdered. *Dead.*

[38] Richard Arabin, son of Serjeant Arabin, well known about London. *Dead.*

[39] Edward F. Smyth Pigott, now her Majesty's Examiner of Plays. "Chat Huant" was Mr. Pigott's *nom de plume* in his own journal, the *Leader*.

[40] Charles Shirley Brooks. Political and social subjects, literary and art criticism, jokes and verse-writing, all were within the range of this admirable journalist. *Dead.*

[41] I used to give a kind of little entertainment, with imitations of various members of the old Cider Cellars Club, who were supposed to have suffered shipwreck.

How one swell bullied "Mathew"!—he who haunts the Garrick hall,
And hours for his master waits, who never comes at all.
* * * * * *

XVI.

And then there came a mighty man, who, 'tis but fair to state,
Among the small is Affable, though Great amongst the great—
The good Pendennis.[42]

Members.

Other prominent members of the club were John Bidwell and the Hon. W. Grey of the Foreign Office, the latter *attaché* at Stockholm; Morgan John O'Connell, nephew of the Liberator and M.P. for Kerry; John E. Jones, an excellent sculptor and Irish humourist; John C. Deane, who held some position in regard to Great Exhibitions generally, and who sang divinely; Luard, a clever artist, who died young; G. L. Hall, also an artist; J. C. O'Dowd, now Deputy Judge-Advocate-General, at that time assistant-editor of the *Globe*, then a Liberal organ; and Captains Charles Seymour and Augustus (Jerry) Meyrick of the Scots Fusiliers.

A delightful resort.

There must have been some peculiar attraction about the place and its associations, for I do not think I ever saw men work so heartily to achieve a success for anything of the kind as did its members. For the first eighteen months of its existence, save, of course, during the autumn vacation, one was sure of finding a gathering there of a night, small perhaps, but always attractive; and it

[42] Of course, Thackeray. *Dead.*

was eminently a place in which men cast aside their ordinary work-a-day shell. There was very little singing, and recitations, which are now so common, would not have been endured for an instant; but there was abundance of good talk, both general conversation and private chat. I well recollect coming in late one night, when Charles Kenney and George Henry Lewes were the only occupants of the room. They were chatting over the fire, literally "playing at"—as children say—being French peasants, and discussing the prospects of an apocryphal vintage in a Burgundy *patois*. Occasionally there would be a field-night, when a mock-trial would be improvised, or some rare story-telling; but there was quite enough amusement to make me a regular nightly visitor, and it was not, I fear, till one A.M. that what we used to call the "North-Western Mail" was ready for departure: said North-Western Mail being a four-wheel cab, which first deposited Albert and Arthur in Percy Street, dropped me in Gloucester Place, and concluded its journey by leaving Sir George Armytage in Cambridge Square.

Opening of "Mont Blanc."

The "Mont Blanc" entertainment was produced at the Egyptian Hall on the 15th March 1852, with an amount of success which was totally unexpected. Since the days of Mathews and my father the monopolylogue had fallen into desuetude, and though an attempt at resuscitation of it had been made by a

Mr. Woodin, with a performance which he called his *Carpet-bag and Sketch-book*, his claim to success lay rather in the rapidity of his costume-changes than in the excellence of his impersonation. Albert Smith's appeal to the public was made from a totally different standpoint. He had a good circulating-library renown as a novelist, *Ledbury* and *Christopher Tadpole* having been widely read; his songs for John Parry had introduced him to another section of the public; while his latest productions—shilling "Social Zoologies," a natural history of *The Gent*, then of *The Ballet-girl*, and then of *The Flirt*—had achieved vast popularity, so much so, indeed, that his publisher, worthy Mr. Bogue, who had paid him 10*l.* for *The Gent*, a few months after gave him 100*l.* for *The Flirt*. He was popular in literary and theatrical circles, and the ascent had been much talked of in "society," one of his colleagues in the adventure having been the Hon. Lionel Sackville West, who is now our Minister at Washington. Then the whole tone of the performance was good, pleasantly and conversationally given as a kind of one-sided chat; the painted views by William Beverly were admirable; and lastly, the comfort of the audience had been thoroughly attended to. They sat on good chairs in a room well carpeted and curtained, charmingly decorated, and properly ventilated; and there were no "harpies," as Albert used to call them, catching

at fees for cloaks, programmes, or what-not. The abolition of fees to attendants, now so general, was introduced by Albert Smith.

Visit to Paris.

Shortly after I had seen this success well assured, and had shared in some of the festivities with which it was celebrated, I started with Mr. O'Beirne for a ten days' holiday in Paris. We put up at the then existing, but since destroyed, Hôtel des Princes in the Rue Richelieu, and had what may emphatically be called "a good time." There we were joined by Tom Macdonald, who knew his Paris from the old Thackeray days. The famous house in "the New Street of the Little Fields" had indeed vanished, but there were others famous then, but which now exist no longer, and of them we made frequent trial. Among them were the old Café de Paris on the Italian Boulevard; and Philippe's in the Rue Montorgueil, with his *œufs brouillés aux truffes;* and his next-door neighbour, the Rochers de Cancale; and Brébant's—though that is, of course, still going—where we met some journalists, one of whom nearly made me faint with delight by alluding to me as "Monsieur notre confrère." There was a Closerie des Lilas in those days, and a garden at Asnières, the spring opening of which we attended, and joined in a persistent chorus of "Des lamp-i-ons!" lasting for hours, because the promised illuminations were not forthcoming.

But what remains freshest in my mind in connection with that Paris visit is going to see the *Dame aux Camélias*, which had been produced three months before, and was then in the full tide of its success at the Vaudeville, with Fechter and Madame Doche in the principal characters. I read somewhere, a few days ago, that this is a very dull and stupid old play, and I daresay it may be; but I know when I first saw it I was more moved than I ever had been by a theatrical performance. I was not twenty-one then, and the sad fortunes of a consumptive *lorette* were more likely to interest me than they would now; and, again, such realistic acting, as exhibited both by the man and woman, I had never seen. I can see Doche standing before the fireplace, *achevant la toilette de ses ongles*, and listening with delight to Armand's narration of his visits of inquiry during her illness; I can see Fechter in the ballroom scene gliding to her side, and pleading, "Marguerite, j'ai la fièvre!" I can see him as the act-drop falls flinging the bank-notes before her, and hear his bitter cry, "J'ai payé cette femme!" My companions were equally impressed, and we strode out of the theatre in silence, each occupied with his own reflections. So that we were not best pleased when an acquaintance, a chattering Englishman, tacked himself on to us, and, first exclaiming that he "didn't think much of it," wanted to know what that fellow was doing when he threw the money

The *Dame aux Camélias.*

about, as "he spoke so infernally quick, I could not make out what he said."

I continued my contributions to the *Court Journal* with perfect regularity and great pleasure to myself during the year, before the end of which I had launched out on to other literary seas. After the death of Lady Blessington, the annual which she had established, the *Keepsake*, was brought out by her niece, the lovely and accomplished Miss Marguerite Power, who, for old friendship's sake, was supported by the leaders among the old Gore House set. Tennyson, Thackeray, and Bulwer Lytton contributed to the first number published under her editorship, so that, though there was no honorarium, it may be imagined I was tolerably proud when an Ingoldsby poem of mine was accepted by Miss Power, to whom I had been presented by Albert Smith, and I found myself in the *Keepsake* for '53, in company with Thackeray, Monckton Milnes, Barry Cornwall, Landor, Chorley, and other well-known names. Kindly Angus Reach selected the poem for a few hearty encouraging words in his review of the annual in the *Morning Chronicle;* and thoughtful Shirley Brooks, who had seen the notice in proof at the *Chronicle* office, told me of it at a supper at Keeley's, and bade me look out for it next day. That was the first time any work of mine was noticed by the press. To the kindness of Albert Smith I also owed an introduction to Mr. John Timbs, then sub-editing the *Illustrated London News*,

The *Keepsake.*

The *Illustrated London News.*

who, in his turn, presented me to his chief, Dr. Charles Mackay, with the result that, when the next Christmas number of the *I. L. N.* was being thought of, two proofs of cuts were forwarded to me, with a request that I would "write up" some verses applicable to them, which, of course, I did, and for which I was very well paid. For several years I wrote verses and stories for the Christmas *Illustrated.*

With the exception of the usual childhood's maladies—measles, scarlet-fever, &c.—I enjoyed very fair health up to this point; but in the very early days of 1853 I was laid up for six weeks with a carbuncle at the back of my neck, which at one time threatened to be serious. As it was, it caused the postponement—though not for long—of an impending and important event, my marriage. Very soon after making Albert Smith's acquaintance, we made two of a large party which went to the evening exhibition of a Diorama of the Holy Land, at St. George's Gallery, Hyde Park Corner. By him I was presented to a young lady, one of the party, with whom I immediately fell desperately in love. After an engagement of twelve months we were married, before I had completed my twenty-second year, at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, on the 14th April 1853. Albert was my "best man," and my mother, Arthur Smith, T. Buckland, Sir George Armytage, and J. L. O'Beirne were among my friends present at the ceremony.

My marriage.

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE.

1853—1857.

FROM a brief honeymoon passed at Bath, Teignmouth, and Torquay, I was recalled by a summons from one of my brothers-in-law, who wanted to see me on special business. I found, on seeing him, that he thought he had sufficient influence to obtain for me the appointment of secretary to an insurance office in the City, which had just become vacant. This offer, after due consideration, I declined. I should not have been fitted for the place; and though the salary would have been more than what I was actually receiving at the Post Office, there were no prospective advantages, while I should have had no chance of pursuing my literary calling, from which I hoped to derive both pleasure and profit.

A new berth offered.

Declined.

When my wife and I returned to town, we took up our abode in a small house where for the past year or two I had lived with my mother, who, with that perfect unselfishness that characterised her life, made it over to us, and agreed to pay the rent. Her intention was to spend some time in the country, and

before we came back she had already settled herself for the summer at Henfield, a village in Sussex, near Hurstpierpoint.

I become a house-holder.

Our house was in what was then called Gloucester Place, New Road, at immediate right angles to, but having nothing in common with, Gloucester Place, Portman Square, a far grander locality. The New Road has since been subdivided into Marylebone and Euston Roads, but then it was the New Road, stretching from Paddington to Islington, and our house was about a mile from the Paddington end. It was small, but so was the rent, sixty pounds a year, and it was quite large enough for my wife and me and our two servants. It had a little garden in front, between it and the road, with a straight line of flagstones leading direct from the gate to the doorsteps, and bits of flower-beds (in which nothing ever grew) intersected by little gravel-paths about a foot wide. This garden was a source of great delight to my humorous friends. Albert Smith would be seen carefully putting one foot before the other, in order that he might not step off the path, and, after wandering in and out between the little beds, would feign excessive fatigue on his arrival at the house, declaring he had been "lost in the shrubbery;" Arthur would suggest that we should have a guide on the spot to show visitors the nearest way; while Collingwood Ibbetson hoped we intended giving some outdoor fêtes in the summer, assuring

The "grounds"

us that the "band of the Life Guards would look splendid on that," pointing to a bit of turf about the size of a pocket-handkerchief. When the street-door was opened wide back, it entirely absorbed the hall, and we could not get out of the dining-room door; but then we could, of course, always pass out through the "study," a little room like a cistern, which just held my desk and one chair.

The premises.

There was a very small yard at the back, opening on to a set of stables which had their real entrance in the mews; but we were compelled to cover all our back windows with putty, imitative of ground-glass, on which we stuck cut-out paper designs of birds and flowers, as these looked directly on the rooms over the stables, inhabited by a coachman and his family; and the sight of a stalwart man at the opposite window, shaving himself in very dingy shirt-sleeves, within a few feet of your nose, was not wholly agreeable. We were rather stifled in the up-stairs rooms, owing to low ceilings and a diffidence we felt as to opening the windows; for the New Road was a dusty thoroughfare, and the immediate vicinity of a cab-stand, though handy on some occasions, lets one into rather a larger knowledge of the stock of expletives with which the English language abounds than is good for polite ears. But when we knew that the coachman was out, we used to open the back windows and grow very enthusiastic over "fresh air from

Hampstead and Highgate," which, nevertheless, always seemed to me to have a somewhat stably twang.

However, we were very happy in that little house, and neither we nor our friends took much heed of its smallness or lack of conveniences. Our *ménage* was humble enough, and our "good plain cook" was not always to be trusted. I recollect one day, when a boiled leg of mutton had made its appearance in a very "gory" state, Albert went down into the kitchen, and with his own hands prepared an excellent broil. I could not afford good wine, and would not give bad; but there was an ever-flowing barrel of Romford ale, and some Irish whisky, which I procured through Mayne Reid—"Bushmills" was its name—which was highly esteemed. All my old Fielding friends—the Smiths, Ibbetson, Sir George Armytage, W. H. Russell, "Boldero" Goodlake, Peter Cunningham, W. P. Hale, O'Beirne, and T. K. Holmes—would look in from time to time; as also Mayne Reid; W. W. Fenn, who had known me years before; William Coxon, of the 13th Hussars, brother of one of my colleagues at the Post Office; and Herbert Harrington, with whom I afterwards collaborated in dramatic work. Our *ménage*.

We went out a good deal; there were frequent suddenly improvised suppers at Albert's rooms, or dinners at Verrey's. Sundays we almost invariably spent in the company of the Keeleys, either dining at

their house at Brompton Square, or joining with them in some excursion to Richmond, Hampton, Thames Ditton, &c. We had some delightful Sundays at Albert's cottage at Chertsey, whither we would drive on a private omnibus or coach, and dine in a tent in the garden. One large party there I remember, at which it had been whispered Kossuth, then in England, would be present, and there was great disappointment at his non-arrival. In the middle of dinner, however, there was a great stir, and Albert, making his way through the tent, returned with the distinguished Hungarian. It was, in reality, Tom Taylor, who, admirably disguised with slouched hat and beard—at that time T. T. was clean shaven—delivered a most wonderful composite speech, a few real German words mixed up with much English, pronounced like and sounding like German, to the general delight. We spent a few delightful days with Ibbetson, who had taken a cottage at Hampton Wick; and used to run down to Brighton, to a cheap little lodging we had found there, whenever we could spare the time and the money.

Sunday excursions

One of our earliest and kindest friends was Mrs. Milner Gibson, who never had a reception without sending us a card. A genuine instinct of hospitality, an innate good feeling, the pleasure that arises from giving pleasure to others, the happiness of seeing those around her happy, were the sole end and

Mrs. Milner Gibson's receptions

aim of the lady who presided over the miscellaneous company that used to meet together in the corner house of Wilton Crescent. Louis Blanc, Mazzini, Sir Alexander Cockburn, Huddleston, Q.C.; Phinn, Q.C.; Planché, Mr. and Mrs. Torrens, Sir Charles and Lady Eastlake, Thackeray, Monckton Milnes, Doyle, Albert and Arthur Smith, Landseer and Leech, Swinton, the Charles Keans, Mrs. Sartoris, Costa, Benedict, Leighton, the Henry Reeves, Pigott, Halle, Biletta, Palgrave Simpson, Chorley, the Alfred Wigans, Mrs. Proctor, Mrs. Dickens—these, together with a troop of Irishmen, Radical members of Parliament, and foreign exiles, were representative guests. It was no mere affair of small-talk, ices, and lemonade. A substantial supper was a feature of the evening, and the foreigners had a pleasant way of rushing down directly that meal was served and sweeping the table. It was here that Leech, returning flushed from an encounter with the linkman, told me laughingly he would not have minded if "Mr. Leech's carriage" had been called, but that the fellow would roar out "The keb from Nottin' 'Ill!"

Judge Talfourd's hospitality.

Another house where we were made very welcome was Mr. Justice Talfourd's, in Russell Square, where the company was pretty much the same, with fewer foreigners and more Bar, and where the kindly host, with short-cropped, iron-gray hair and beaming face, would ask his friends, and specially any strangers,

to "do him the pleasure of dwinking a glass of wine with him," from the dumpy little Steinwein flagon he held in his hand.

Meanwhile, I was not idle. I continued my regular work for the *Court Journal* and wrote a few dramatic criticisms for the *Leader*, a brilliant but not very long-lived journal, which my friend Pigott owned, and to which George Henry Lewes, E. M. Whitty, and other clever men contributed. I had also found my way into several periodicals, notably into *Bentley's Miscellany*, in which appeared my first tale-essay, "My New Year's Eve." I was much pleased at this, for *Bentley's Miscellany* had been portion of my earliest reading, almost as a child; and when I first went to the Post Office I used to lunch at a coffee-shop, long since pulled down, in the first floor of which there was a large collection of greasy well-thumbed *Miscellany* volumes, which were my delight. Mr. Bentley, to whom I was introduced by Albert Smith, took two or three of my articles, and as many more appeared in *Chambers's Journal*, then, I think, under the editorship of Leitch Ritchie.

Fresh ground.

I was very anxious that these sketches should appear as a book, and when I thought I had sufficient material, I went, with an introduction from Albert, to Mr. Bogue, the publisher, at 86 Fleet Street, and asked him if he would undertake the little volume. Mr. Bogue received me very pleasantly: I

My first book.

little thought while chatting with him in his office at the back of the shop that, on that very spot exactly twenty years later, the first numbers of *The World* would be published. I left the "copy" with Mr. Bogue, and when I next saw him he told me he was willing to undertake the venture at his own risk; as I was almost utterly unknown, he could not give me anything for it, but he would produce it in such a way that it would be useful as an advertisement for me. To this I agreed, and he proved as good as his word: "*My Haunts, and their Frequenters*, by Edmund H. Yates," dedicated to his "earliest and kindest literary friend, Albert Smith," appeared in July 1854, well printed on good paper, and, for an illustration on the cover, a somewhat fancy portrait of the author, seated at his oak davenport, drawn by my old friend, H. G. Hine, who has since won a very high position amongst water-colour artists.

Critical opinions.

The little book was kindly received by the press: the grave *Athenæum* said, "There is more bone in this contribution to shilling light literature than we usually recognise. Some of the sketches are amusing, and neatly finished off;" the *Atlas*, then extant, and edited by Robert Bell, found it "a lively sketch of the life of a gay man in town, written in a more gentlemanly tone than is usual in such works;" and the *Era*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, and, of course, the *Court Journal*, had all something

pleasant to say. I could never learn anything about the sale from Mr. Bogue, save that he "didn't complain," so I imagine he recouped himself for the outlay.

That same year '54 was memorable to me in many ways. In it I made the acquaintance of Charles Dickens. There was no one in the world for whom I had so much admiration, or whom I so longed to know. I had no special object in calling upon him, certainly not the idea of getting him to take my work, for I perfectly allowed that that was not up to the *Household Words* standard; but I thought he would receive me kindly, for my name's sake, and he did. I called at Tavistock House, gave in my card, and was ushered into the drawing-room—a huge room at the back of the house. After a few minutes a lady entered, Miss Hogarth, Dickens's sister-in-law, and, in his own words, "the best and truest friend man ever had." She greeted me most pleasantly, with a winning smile, and told me that Mr. Dickens was busily engaged on work which he could not leave at that moment; but that if I was, as he supposed, the son of Mr. Frederick Yates, formerly of the Adelphi, he would be delighted to see me on the next Sunday, at two o'clock. Of course I gratefully accepted this appointment, and went away. Be sure I was punctual on Sunday, when I was ushered straight into the presence of the great man, and found

I call on Dickens.

him sitting at his desk in the window of the front room on the first floor, looking on to the little enclosure in which the house stood. He rose to greet me, took my hand in his hearty grip, and placed me in a chair opposite to his.

His personal appearance.

There were no photographs of celebrities to be purchased in those days, and I had formed my idea of Dickens's personal appearance from the portrait of him, by Maclise, prefixed to *Nickleby*: the soft and delicate face, with the long hair, the immense stock, and the high-collared waistcoat. He was nothing like that. Indeed, my mother, who saw him shortly after this, and who had not met him for fifteen years, declared she should not have recognised him, for, save his eyes, there was no trace of the original Dickens about him. His hair, though worn still somewhat long, was beginning to be sparse; his cheeks were shaved; he had a moustache and a "door-knocker" beard encircling his mouth and chin. His eyes were wonderfully bright and piercing, with a keen, eager outlook; his bearing hearty and somewhat aggressive. He wore, on that occasion, a loose jacket and wide trousers, and sat back in his chair, with one leg under him and his hand in his pocket, very much as in Frith's portrait.

His kind reception of me.

"Good God, how like your father!" were his first words. Then he proceeded to talk of his old recollections of the Adelphi, his great admiration for my mother; told me the news of my father's

death was part of the budget brought out by the Liverpool pilot, on his return from America; asked me of my mother, of myself, my position and prospects, all in the kindest way. He was off that week with his family to spend the summer at Boulogne, and hoped they should see me on their return. I asked him about Broadstairs, where I had an idea of going for a little holiday, and he praised the place warmly. I do not think I mentioned my literary aspirations to him, save, perhaps, in a very casual way; but I must very soon after have sent him *My Haunts*, for the following, his first letter to me, alludes to its receipt:

"Boulogne, Thirtieth July 1854.

First letter from him.

My dear Sir,—I have brought your book away, with other pleasant gifts of that nature, to read under a haystack here. If I delay thanking you for it any longer, I am afraid you may think either that I have not got it, or that I don't care for it. As either mistake would be really painful to me, I send this small parcel of thanks to London in a *Household Words* packet, and beg to express a hope that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you under my London haystack (metaphorical for ceiling) when I return home for the winter; and in the mean time, I hope you may like Broadstairs half as well as I do.

Very faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS."

My eldest son's birth and christening.

The first time we met after this was, however, under *my* "haystack, metaphorical for ceiling." On the 14th October, this year '54, my eldest son, Frederick Henry Albert, was born; and at a little dinner, given in honour of the christening, towards the end

of the following month, Dickens honoured us with his company, and was most delightful. My mother and the two godfathers—Albert Smith and Mr. Wilkinson, my father-in-law—were also present.

In the early autumn I was asked by Mr. Bogue to call in Fleet Street "on a matter of business," which proved to be a desire to secure my services and coöperation in the establishment of a projected new magazine, to be published by Bogue, to be called *Cruikshank's Magazine*, to be illustrated by the celebrated artist, and to be edited by Mr. Smedley, "whom, of course, I knew." I had never heard of Mr. Smedley, and it was not until Bogue mentioned him as the author of *Frank Fairlegh* that I knew of whom he spoke. With that, and other novels from the same pen, full of life and "go," hunting and racing scenes, and strange adventures, I had a casual acquaintance; but I had never seen the author, never met any one who knew him. So I took a letter of introduction from Mr. Bogue, and went off at once to Jermyn Street, where Mr. Smedley lived, in the aspiring frame of mind befitting one about to enlist as a light free-lance under a new chief.

Cruikshank's Magazine.

As I rode up in the cab, I was picturing to myself the man with whom I was about to become acquainted; and as I now write, those thoughts recur to me exactly as they passed through my mind. I have laughed over them so often with him who was

My ideal picture of Frank Smedley.

their subject, that there is no wonder at their remaining fixed on my memory. I figured to myself a tall, strongly-built man, of about forty years of age, bald, with a fringe of hair, large breezy whiskers, strong bony hands, and general muscular development, rather "horsey" in his dress and talk and manner. I expected that his tone would be rather *brusque*, and that I might probably be unable to attain his required standard of "knowingness" in matters relating to the field and the road.

The reality.

I sent in my letter, and I was ushered into the presence of a gentleman, whom, even in the dim light of a shaded lamp standing on the table by his elbow, I could tell to be suffering under some malformation, as he sat in his wheel-chair—a little man, with a peculiar, clever face; piercing eyes, never moving from the person he was addressing; a manner beginning in earnestness, and then straying into banter; a voice beginning in harshness, and modulating into pleasantest cadence; a bearing which, although, in its endeavour to be thoroughly independent, it almost verged on the repulsive, was, notwithstanding, indefinably attractive. I was so astonished at finding such a difference in what I had expected, that, as I have since thought, my answers to his short and pertinent questions must have been vague and unsatisfactory. At all events, I recollect that my new acquaintance's tone became

slightly sarcastic, which recalled me to myself; that I endeavoured to answer him as best I could; that his manner then changed; and that on that, the first day of our acquaintance, we formed an intimate friendship, which continued until the latest hour of his life.

Frank Smedley's characteristics.

I think that this kindness of heart, veiled occasionally under an affectation of calculating worldliness of mind, and a little cynicism very badly sustained, was the ruling spirit of his life. He was never happy save when doing a kindness to some one—never pleased save when he had some little pet scheme of beneficence, which he would bring out as though he were ashamed of it; while his quivering lips and brimming eyes belied the assumed roughness of his voice and manner. He was soft-hearted to a degree; and his physical malady had kept his intercourse with the world so restricted, that while his mind was full, strong, and manly, his experiences of certain sides of life were as pure and unsullied as those of a young girl. All the impulses of his soul were deep-set, earnest, fervent, and generous. He had heard of the lower views of humanity held by some great men, but he had never had reason to allow their existence; so he frankly and unhesitatingly denied it. He was himself a man "in whom was no guile," and it was very difficult indeed for him to allow its presence in any one else.

With all the masculinity of his writings (and

there are few writers who, in certain phases of description, notably of the hunting-field and the racecourse, have surpassed him), his mind was, to a certain degree, feminine. He had the strong likings and dislikings, petulances, love of small jokes, desire of praise, and irritation at small annoyances, which are frequently found in women; but, on the other hand, he had a magnanimity, an amount of patient long-suffering, and a courage both moral and physical, such as are given to few men. His bodily infirmities, before alluded to, prevented him from indulging in any of the amusements which he most fancied, shut him out from a vast amount of society, kept him a prisoner to his chair; and yet I never heard one syllable of repining escape his lips, though on more than one occasion I have heard him turn off some well-meant though badly-timed commiseration with a light-hearted jest.

A mutual liking springing up between us, I saw much of my new acquaintance; of his father, the High Bailiff of Westminster—a fine, manly, handsome, elderly gentleman, always very kind to me; and of his mother, a very clever woman of society, who "gave up to parties what was meant for"—better things, and from whom he inherited much of his talent. The whole Smedley family, and especially Frank, soon became very fond of my wife, and we were constantly invited to the house. Owing to Frank Smedley's inability

for locomotion, I was enabled to make myself useful to him in seeing the publisher, contributors, and the great George Cruikshank himself, and thus our intimacy rapidly increased. An interview between Cruikshank and Smedley was a very comic sight for a looker-on: the old artist bouncing about the room, illustrating by violent action and gesture everything he said, wholly unrestrained by any fear of becoming grotesque ; and the little editor, screwed up in his wheel-chair, peering at his visitor out of the corners of his small eyes, and strongly appreciating every item of the performance.

Cruikshank and Smedley.

One story of Frank's about his coadjutor always struck me as being very funny. One warm morning Cruikshank arrived in Jermyn Street, and pulled a chair in front of Smedley's desk, being evidently full of business. The old gentleman's *chevelure* in his later days was always of an extraordinary kind, long wisps of gray hair being brought from the back of his head over the scalp, and secured there with a narrow elastic band. But, in addition to this, on this occasion Smedley perceived that Cruikshank had a small perforated bone wheel fixed in the centre of his forehead. So fascinated was Frank by this extraordinary sight that he could not withdraw his eyes from it; and at last, Cruikshank finding his host's gaze stonily fixed on one spot throughout the interview, testily demanded what he was staring at. "Nothing," Frank replied, endeav-

The magic wheel.

ouring to excuse himself; but immediately after, the little wheel became detached, and fell on the floor. "You've dropped something," said Cruikshank, poking after it with his stick. "I? No—you," said his host. "Nonsense!" cried the irascible George, who had now picked it up; "nonsense! What do you think I could do with a thing like this?" "All I know is, that for the last half-hour it has been sticking in the middle of your forehead," returned Frank. "Impossible, sir! quite impossible!" roared Cruikshank. Eventually it appeared that the little wheel was a ventilator, which had slipped from its original position in the crown of Cruikshank's hat, and stuck, with the heat, on his forehead.

Not much was done with *Cruikshank's Magazine*, of which only two or three numbers appeared. As a delineator of character, an illustrator of stories, the veteran artist had lost whatever hold he may once have had on the public, while his fertile fancy, which lasted for many succeeding years, had no scope in such a periodical. However, the magazine had well served my purpose—through it I had established a friendship with Frank Smedley, which was not merely pleasant, but practical. Noting my facility for Ingoldsbian verse, and having himself essayed successfully in that line, my new friend proposed we should jointly publish a shilling book, a collection of metrical stories. I was delighted at the idea, and at

once set about collecting all my floating verse and writing more; Smedley did the same; publishers—they gave us, I think, 20*l.*—were found in the then newly-established firm of Messrs. George Routledge & Co., in Farringdon Street—one of the partners, William Warne, long since dead, was especially kind to me; and in November, "*Mirth and Metre*, by two Merry Men: Frank E. Smedley and Edmund H. Yates," was presented to the public. This little book, funnily illustrated by William McConnell, had a very fair success. Some parodies of mine on Tennyson, Longfellow, Poe, and others, were mightily popular, and are still, I see, from time to time, reproduced in "Collections." The press notices were very good, and altogether I was more than well satisfied.

Mirth and Metre.

Just about this time I obtained more journalistic employment through my friend, Mr. T. Knox Holmes, who had some share in the *Weekly Chronicle*, a journal of modest circulation, the principal distinction of which was that its title was printed in red ink. Its editor and proprietor, Mr. John Sheehan, known as the "Irish whisky-drinker," was in Paris at the time, and his *locum tenens* was Mr. J. R. Robinson, now the well-known manager of the *Daily News*, who received me with great kindness, and with whom I contracted an intimate friendship, which still exists. The remuneration was small, but the work was pleasant. I supplied dramatic criti-

Mr. J. R. Robinson.

cism, and a column of "literary and artistic gossip," my first attempt at anything of the kind.

As my family and my work were both increasing, I found it necessary to give up my little house, and to seek for larger and more accessible quarters—nearer, that is to say, to the theatres and Fleet Street, the journalistic Mecca. I found them in Doughty Street, close by the Foundling Hospital, a locality not unknown to literary fame. Sydney Smith had lived there; Shirley Brooks was born there; at No. 48 Charles Dickens resided for some time, writing there a great portion of *Pickwick*. I lived at 43, and opposite to me was Mr. Tegg the publisher, a name familiar since my childhood as that of the firm by which the delightful *Peter Parley* series of juvenile books was issued. It was a broad, airy, wholesome street—none of your common thoroughfares, to be rattled through by vulgar cabs and earth-shaking Pickford's vans; but a self-included property, with a gate at each end, and a lodge with a porter in a gold-laced hat and the Doughty arms on the buttons of his mulberry-coloured coat, to prevent any one, except with a mission to one of the houses, from intruding on the exclusive territory.

Doughty Street worthies.

The rent was seventy pounds a year, "on a repairing lease" (which means an annual outlay of from five-and-twenty to thirty pounds to keep the bricks and mortar and timbers together), and the

accommodation consisted of a narrow dining-room painted salmon-colour, and a little back room looking out upon a square black enclosure in which grew fearful fungi; two big drawing-rooms, the carpeting of which nearly swallowed a quarter's income; two good bedrooms, and three attics. I never went into the basement save when I visited the cellar, which was a mouldy vault under the street pavement, only accessible through the area, and consequently rendering any one going to it liable to the insults of rude boys, who would grin through the area-railings, and make ribald remarks; but I believe the kitchen was pronounced by the servants to be "stuffy," and the whole place "ill-conwenient," there being no larder, pantry, nor the usual domestic arrangements. I know, too, that we were supposed to breed and preserve a very magnificent specimen of the blackbeetle: insects which migrated to different parts of the house in droves, and which, to the number of five-and-twenty being met slowly ascending the drawing-room stairs, caused me to invest money in a hedgehog—an animal that took up his abode in the coal-cellar on the top of the coals, and, retiring thither early one morning after a surfeit of beetles, was supposed to have been inadvertently "laid" in the fire by the cook in mistake for a lump of Wallsend.

Our Doughty Street house.

I don't think there were many advantages in the Doughty Street house (though I was very happy

there, and had an immense amount of fun and pleasure), beyond the proximity to my work, and the consequent saving in cab-hire and fatigue. But I do recollect the drawbacks; and although many years have elapsed since I experienced them, they are constantly rising in my mind. I remember our being unable ever to open any window without an immediate inroad of "blacks:" triturated soot of the most penetrating kind, which at once made piebald all the antimacassars, toilet-covers, counterpanes, towels, and other linen; I remember our being unable to get any sleep after five A.M., when, at the builder's which abutted on our back enclosure, a tremendous bell clanged, summoning the workmen to labour, and from which time there was such a noise of sawing and hammering, and planing and filing, and tool-grinding and bellows-blowing, interspersed with strange bellowings in the Celtic tongue from one Irish labourer to another, and mingled with objurgations in pure Saxon from irate foremen, that one might as well have attempted a quiet nap in the neighbourhood of Babel when the tower was in course of erection.

Drawbacks.

I remember the hot summer Sunday afternoons, when the pavement would be red-hot, and the dust, and bits of straw, and scraps of paper would blow fitfully about with every little puff of air, and the always dull houses would look infinitely duller with their blinds down, and no sound would fall upon the

A dull locality.

ear save the distant hum of the cabs in Holborn, or the footfall of some young person in service going to afternoon church—or to its substitute—in all the glory of open-worked stockings, low shoes, and a prayer-book swaddled in a white cotton pocket-handkerchief. I have sat at my window on scores of such Sundays, eyeing the nose of Lazarus over the dwarf Venetian blind opposite, or the gorgeous waistcoat of Eliason, a little higher up (for the Tribes are great in the neighbourhood). I have stared upwards to catch a glimpse of the scrap of blue unclouded sky, visible above the houses; and then I have thought of Richmond Hill; of snowy tablecloths, and cool Moselle-cup, and flounder-zootje, in a room overlooking the river at the Orkney Arms, at Taplow; of that sea-breeze which passes the little hotel at Freshwater Bay, in wild hurry to make play over the neighbouring downs; of shaded walks, and cool retreats, and lime avenues, and overhung bathing-places, and all other things delicious at that season; until I have nearly gone mad with hatred of the stifling streets, and fancied myself pretty able to comprehend the feelings of the Polar bears in their dull retrogressive promenade in the Zoological Gardens.

That none of our friends had ever heard of Doughty Street; that no cabman could be instructed as to its exact whereabout, naming it generally as "somewhere near the Fondlin';" that migration to a

friend's house in a habitable region to dinner occasioned an enormous expense in cab-fare; that all the tradesmen with whom we had previously dealt declined our custom, "as they never sent that way;" that we found Tottenham Court Road a line of demarcation, behind which we left light and sunshine—on our side of which we tumbled into dulness and gloom; that we were in the midst of a hansom-cab colony, clattering home at all hours of the night; and in the immediate neighbourhood of all the organ-men, who gave us their final grind just before midnight: all these were minor but irritating annoyances. However, I lived there for nearly six busy, and for the most part happy and prosperous, years, during which "red-hot youth cooled down to iron man," and which were to me full of more or less interesting incident.

Angus Reach.

Early in the spring of 1855 Mr. Angus Bethune Reach, one of the best and brightest of the younger writers of the day—his romance, *Clement Lorimer*, and his *Claret and Olives*, travels through the wine-producing districts of France, are still capital reading—became, through an attack of softening of the brain, wholly incapable of further self-help. For months previous, and as long as there was a chance of his recovery, his regular work had been duly performed by his intimate friend Shirley Brooks, and the proceeds as duly handed to the sick man's wife. Mr. Reach's

case was now, however, pronounced hopeless, and his friends cast about for some means of procuring a lump sum of money to be appropriated to his benefit.

The notion of performing an amateur pantomime originated with Albert Smith, who knew that in "Joe" Robins there were all the requisites of an extraordinary Clown; we found a Harlequin in Mr. John Bidwell of the Foreign Office, a singularly graceful and agile dancer; Arthur Smith was Pantaloon; while for me the character of the "Lover," the person who is Harlequin's unsuccessful rival in Columbine's affections—common in Grimaldi's day, but since abandoned—was revived. We placed ourselves under the tuition of the celebrated Mr. W. H. Payne, the king of pantomime, who, with his two excellent sons, "Harry" and "Fred," devoted himself to us. We worked for six weeks, in all our available leisure, at rehearsals; and we performed on Saturday, March 31, 1855, at the Olympic Theatre. A true appreciation of our extraordinary success can best be obtained by a perusal of the admirable critique in the *Times* of the following Monday, written by John Oxenford in his most delightful vein:

An amateur pantomime.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.

Theatrical amateurs usually soar high. For tragedy they have an instinctive preference, and if they descend to comedy, it must be of the most special kind, so that the temporary

fall from that exalted position which all amateurs are supposed (socially, not artistically) to hold may be as slight as possible.

But who ever heard of an amateur pantomime—not, be it understood, one of those pantomimes of action which set forth a fable in dumbshow instead of words—but a real ordinary pantomime, with an amateur Harlequin, Clown, and Pantaloon?

When first the words "Amateur Pantomime" were put about they seemed irreconcilable terms, like "round square," or "wooden loadstone;" they seemed to denote a moral and physical impossibility. The supposed moral impossibility resulted from that dignity at which we have hinted as an inherent quality in amateurs. "No young man of noble birth or liberal sentiments," says Plutarch, "from seeing the Jupiter at Pisa, would desire to be Phidias; or, from the sight of the Juno at Argos, to be Polycletus; or Anacreon, or Philemon, or Archilochus, though delighted with their poems." Plutarch's notions of high art were high indeed, for they excluded all sculpture and poetry, however ideal; and amateurs, though they cannot go this length (otherwise they would even cease to be amateurs), have still certain Plutarchian elements in their composition. They would modify the sweeping declaration into a special contempt for "low art," and so far dilute the doctrine as simply to maintain that he who applauds the Boxing Night anthem entitled "Hot Codlins" should not therefore desire to sing it, and that a successful leap of Harlequin through a window, though it may excite wonder in the dress circle, should not therefore rouse emulation.

More potent still seemed the objection of physical impossibility. Professional pantomimists are, in a manner, born to the business, and setting all questions of dignity aside, how could a head that had merely served as a case to hold brains be converted into a pedestal for the support of the inverted body? how could the mysteries of a somersault be solved by a frame only inured to the most stately conventional movements? Moreover, the penalty of non-success in pantomime is somewhat severe. A failure in Hamlet can, at the most, only subject an unhappy man to the pleasantries of his

acquaintance, while the Clown, who plucks no histrionic laurels, may literally break his neck in the attempt.

However, notwithstanding all reasonings on the score of impossibility, the report that an amateur pantomime was in course of rehearsal at the Olympic Theatre was not to be shaken. It remained as a good, firm report, with a strong constitution, till at last it took the shape of a regular fact. Somehow or other, certainly not by way of official communication, all the world suddenly knew that the "Fielding Club" (an institution famed for the brilliancy of its wit and the lateness of its hours), having generously made up its mind to assist a most deserving literary gentleman, who is now in distressed circumstances, had hit upon a scheme at once efficient and eccentric. The gentlemen of the "Fielding Club," with Mr. Albert Smith as their chief, were to play the comic pantomime of *Harlequin Guy Fawkes* at the Olympic Theatre.

The excitement produced by the possession of this knowledge was wonderful. To prevent crowd and inconvenience, a comparatively small quantity of tickets was issued; but large, indeed, was the number of applicants, and all sorts of legends are afloat respecting the prices given for stalls and boxes.

On Saturday—an evening long to be remembered in dramatic annals—the promised treat was given. The audience, which contained a more than ordinary proportion of literary celebrities, and was altogether of the most refined and brilliant kind, seemed actually oppressed by the weight of expectation. The farce of *My Neighbour's Wife* commenced the business of the evening, and the amateurs were laughed at as each made his appearance. But the laugh soon died away, and the look of anxious expectation returned. What is an amateur farce to a public that has come to see an amateur pantomime?

The great solemnity was ushered in by a prologue, the work of Mr. Sunderland Schneider—psha! of Mr. Tom Taylor. Part of the humour of the evening consisted in the odd names which the performers gave themselves in the programme; but we need not keep up this part of the joke. Everybody in the house knew every principal actor on the stage, or, at any rate, sat next to somebody who did, and, therefore, no secrecy was

gained by such names as "Paul Grave" or "Mountain White." A Sphinx is no mystery in a land where every inhabitant is an Œdipus, and, as we do not choose to appear more ignorant than all the rest of our fellow-citizens, we break through the very thin gauze formed by the appellations in the bills, and mention real names.

The prologue, then, which was spoken by Mr. Cole, in the character of Shakespeare, Mr. Palgrave Simpson as the "Present Drama," and Miss Oliver as the Spirit of Pantomime, and aimed at a sort of amicable settlement of the differences that exist between the "slow" and "fast" factions, was the work of Mr. Tom Taylor. Abounding in pleasant allusions, and tastefully ending with a reference to the charitable object of the performance, this prologue delighted everybody as a choicely-written work, alike happy in its gayer and its graver tone.

But the prologue was not the pantomime. Other amateurs might have spoken Mr. Taylor's pointed dialogue, but the great question of amateur harlequinade was yet unsolved. Again did the grave expectant mood return.

The overture was played, and then—awful moment—the curtain rose, and showed the "Vaults below the Houses of Parliament." Barrels of gunpowder were heaped around, and on one of these sat Mr. Albert Smith, as Catesby, attired in ancient fashion and smoking a pipe. He introduced the action by singing one of those rapid songs in which he has only one rival (viz. Mr. C. Mathews), and thus lyrically giving a *précis* of so much English history as was connected with the fable. The audience thundered applause; but even now there was no wonder, for the fact that Mr. Albert Smith is a capital comic singer is known to all the world. It was when Mr. Holmes entered, in the dress of Guy Fawkes, and bowed his forehead down to his toes, with all that freedom from bone which is peculiar to pantomimic art, that the new sensation was produced.* Yes! people really began to believe that an amateur pantomime was possible.

* Mr. T. K. Holmes still preserves his strength and agility. Born in 1808, he, on September 30th, 1884, rode a tricycle over one hundred and fifteen miles within ten consecutive hours, only dismounting once for five minutes!

A great weight was, therefore, removed from the mind, which became keenly susceptible of enjoyment. A parody on an Italian air, admirably sung by Mr. Holmes, was loudly applauded, and the statement of the Lord Monteagle of King James's time that he was "Lord Monteagle, formerly Spring Rice," elicited roars of mirth. But the cream of the introduction was the terrific combat between Catesby and Fawkes, in which Messrs. Smith and Holmes went through all those conventional *poses* that earned immortality in those good old days when the Coburg had not yet taken the name of the Victoria.

The introduction was comprised in a single scene, and, according to a common modern practice, the actors of the harlequinade were not the same with those of the story. When the moment of "transformation" arrived, and the Spirit of the Thames, enacted by Miss Martindale, told Catesby to change into Harlequin, the old nervousness of the audience returned once more. What they had hitherto seen showed grotesque talent, it was true, but, after all, it was only the "little go" of the affair; the difficulties of Clownery and Pantaloonery had yet to be surmounted, and a breakdown was yet upon the cards.

Most efficiently were these fears dispelled by the first entrance of the chief characters. Mr. Bidwell looked as much like a real Harlequin as any that ever sparkled at Christmas; Mr. Arthur Smith was a thorough Pantaloon; Mr. Edmund Yates was an unexceptionable lover; and Mr. J. Robins was an ordinary—no, he was not, he was an extraordinary—Clown; for, with his stout figure, his fat face, and the expression of quiet humour in his eyes and mouth, he gave a taste of that quality which playgoers of thirty years' standing may recollect in Grimaldi, but of which modern *habitués* of the theatre know but little. The Columbine was, of course, professional, and a more excellent Columbine could not have been obtained than Miss Rosina Wright.

In the various scenes of the harlequinade the amateurs were successively put to every test of pantomimic art, excepting that talent for posture-making which is a modern innova-

tion, and passed victoriously through them all. The business-like manner in which they executed all the conventional movements, supposed to be the exclusive property of a small body of professional artists, was really amazing. The audience could scarcely believe that Harlequin was in earnest when he prepared to leap through a wall; but he was so notwithstanding, and, if he was not quite glib the first time, he went through the scene like a shot whenever he repeated the exploit. It could scarcely be expected that amateurs would interchange those violent assaults which make up so much of the comic business of pantomime, but never did Clown and Pantaloon belabour each other more heartily, or tumble down with more formidable truthfulness, than Mr. J. Robins and Mr. Arthur Smith. The audience, inspired by the triumph of the performers, at last forgot that they were amateurs altogether, and shouted aloud for "Hot Codlins." The new test was gallantly accepted, and Mr. J. Robins sang the famous legend of the "little old woman" with all contortions of voice and countenance that would have satisfied the most rigid judge of pantomimic proprieties. Nor should we, while recording the excellence of the principal characters, forget the accessories. A series of burlesque *poses plastiques*, executed by Messrs. Holmes, Ibbetson, and Hallett, in the dress of acrobats, were inimitably comic; and scarcely less so was the performance of Mr. E. Yates, who, as a careful tight-rope dancer, chalked a line upon the ground, and upon that, instead of a real cord, went through all the business of actual peril and precaution. Mr. Albert Smith, too, reappeared in the harlequinade, dressed as a showman, and sang the late Mr. Mathews's song of the "Country Fair," with several modifications of his own. Some exceedingly clever balancing tricks were done by a gentleman who seemed to be unknown to the generality of the audience; but Mr. Albert Smith, who was on the stage during the feats, called out that he was an amateur.

The fall of the curtain was the signal for shouts of applause and calls for the principal actors, and, as the audience left the theatre, one declaration might be plainly heard from many lips, "This is the best pantomime I ever saw in my life."

The results of this performance enabled us to provide for the comfort of our friend in his last days (he died within twelve months), and the fame of it reached the ears of Royalty. The consequence was a command to repeat the pantomime in the presence of the Queen and the Prince Consort—a command which we obeyed shortly afterwards at Drury Lane Theatre, with enormous success, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, then a lad of fourteen, taking especial delight in the performance. The large receipts were handed, at her Majesty's suggestion, to the Royal Naval Female School—an admirable institution, which, in gratitude for the bounty of the Fielding Club, made three of its committee-men life governors, the privileges of which position I still enjoy. A large addition to the funds of Wellington College—the proceeds of the performance of the amateur pantomime, with a different "opening," in the June of the following year—did not, if I remember rightly, elicit anything but a bare expression of thanks. In the second amateur pantomime Mr. Bidwell's place as Harlequin was filled by Mr. Samuel Brandram, now so well known as an exponent of Shakespeare.

Repeated, before her Majesty.

Disposition of funds raised.

On the 9th June 1855 was published the first number of the *Illustrated Times*, and about ten days after, having heard that its principal proprietor was Mr. Bogue, I called upon him and asked for employment. In reply to his question of what I proposed

The *Illustrated Times*.

doing, I developed a little scheme which seemed to please him, and which he bade me go at once and talk over with Mr. Henry Vizetelly, the editor. Mr. Vizetelly, a thoroughly sharp and practical business man in journalism, wholly unhampered by conventionality or precedent, was amused and perhaps somewhat impressed with my idea, and desired me to write him a specimen article, which was published in the number for the 30th June, with the title "The Lounger at the Clubs." This was the commencement of that style of "personal" journalism which is so very much to be deprecated and so enormously popular. Into the vexed question of how far such style of writing is permissible, of the good or harm that it does, I am certainly not going to enter here. I only know that for six or seven years I kept up a continuous comment on the social, literary, and dramatic events of the day; and it was, I believe, Mr. Vizetelly's opinion that my flippant nonsense did as much for the sale of the paper as the deeper and drier wisdom of my colleagues. If, as I am given to understand, a prominent attraction of *The World* is, to the majority of its readers, "What the World Says," unquestionably that article had its origin and foundation in "The Lounger at the Clubs;" and I can never cease to be grateful to Mr. Henry Vizetelly for the unswerving kindness with which he supported me, an unknown struggler, in those

Mr. H. Vizetelly.

Personal journalism.

"The Lounger at the Clubs."

early days, against a powerful clique. Many of the rising men of the day—George Sala, Robert Brough, James Hannay, Frederick Greenwood, Sutherland Edwards, Augustus Mayhew, Edward Draper—were on the staff of the little paper, which did well—so well that the proprietor of its big predecessor found it necessary to purchase it, and thenceforward to let it fly with partially-clipped wings.

Visiting relations had, in the mean time, been established between us and the Dickens family, and we were invited to Tavistock House, on the 18th of June, to witness the performance of Wilkie Collins's drama, *The Lighthouse*, in which the author and Dickens, Frank Stone, Augustus Egg, Mark Lemon, and the ladies of the family took part. My mother, who went with us, told me that Dickens, in intensity, reminded her of Lemaître in his best days. I was much struck by the excellence of Lemon's acting, which had about it no trace of the amateur. At the performance my mother was seated next a tall gray-haired gentleman—a most pleasant talker, she said—who proved to be Mr. Gilbert a'Beckett, the magistrate and wit; and in the drawing-room afterwards there was a warm greeting between her and Lady Becher, formerly Miss O'Neil, whom she had not seen for many years. It was a great night for my mother. She renewed her acquaintance with Stanfield and Roberts, and was addressed in very complimentary

Amateur performance at Tavistock House.

terms by the great John Forster. Thackeray and his daughters, Leech, Jerrold, Lord Campbell, and Carlyle were there.

Birth of twin-sons.

On the 27th September in this year twin-sons were born to me. Two days later, being at the Garrick and seeing Thackeray there, I asked him for an autograph for a book which I had just established. He sat down at once, and wrote the following:

"Michaelmas Day, 1855.

Thackeray's letter of congratulation.

My dear Yates,—Am I to condole with, or congratulate, you, on the announcement in to-day's paper? May every year increase your happiness, and good fortune attend your increase! I know I am writing in an affected manner, as you are pleased to desire my autograph. I assure the friend for whom it is destined that I am quite incapable of being funny on a sudden, easily abashed, of a modest retiring disposition, forty-four years old, and—Yours truly, my dear Yates,

W. M. THACKERAY.

P.S.—The T of the signature I do not think is near so elegant as my ordinary T's are; in fact, my attention was drawn off just as I was turning it.

E. YATES, Esq. (Private and confidential.)"

Madame Sala.

Owing to these domestic arrangements, my holiday this year was taken late, and passed at Brighton, where I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Madame Sala, mother of my friend G. A. S.—a most entertaining and charming woman. The twin-sons throve; and when it became a question of their christening, I wrote to Dickens, who was wintering in Paris, and asked if he would act as sponsor to one of them. Here is his reply:

"Paris, 49 Avenue des Champs Elysées,
Wednesday, Second January 1856.

My dear Yates,—Supposing both Corsican Brothers to be available, I think I should prefer being godfather to the one who isn't Kean. With this solitary stipulation, I very cordially respond to your proposal, and am happy to take my friendly and sponsorial seat at your fireside. Dickens to be godfather.

I will write you word when I propose making another flight to London, for I must come and see my boy, whether we fill the sparkling wine-cup (when I was in America, an editor wrote me a note of invitation, begging me to come and 'crush' that article with him) or not.

When you represent me at the font, and are renouncing, think that on Christmas Day I had seven sons in the banquet-hall of this apartment—which would not make a very large warm bath—and renounce my example.

Mrs. Dickens and Miss Hogarth unite with me in kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Yates, as to whom I now consider myself, with much pleasure, a sort of relation.

Very faithfully yours,
CHARLES DICKENS."

The boys were christened shortly afterwards, Dickens being godfather to one, and Frank Smedley to the other.

I had seen Dickens twice before his departure for Paris—once when he presided over a dinner given to Thackeray, immediately before his departure for America, at which, through the kindness of Peter Cunningham, who acted as honorary secretary, I managed to be present. It was a most interesting occasion, and Dickens, in proposing the toast of the evening, spoke with much eloquence. Thackeray, too, was plainly moved, so much so that his reply Dinner to Thackeray

was very short; he tried to pass off his emotion with some joke about the coming voyage and the steward, but it was too much for him. Dickens left early, and Jerrold was voted to the chair; whence he made a speech, proposing the health of Shirley Brooks, as the "most rising journalist of the day." Brooks at that time had but recently joined the *Punch* staff. He had literally fought his way on to it, and by the vigour of his onslaught on the quasi-comic journal, and specially on Jerrold himself, had compelled his recognition and absorption. With the exception of Bunn's memorable "Word with *Punch*," a poem written by Brooks, and published in the *Man in the Moon*, called "Our Flight with *Punch*," was the most telling attack ever made on Messrs. Bradbury & Evans's property. Thus it commenced:

Shirley Brooks.

His cleverness and determination.

"Up, up, thou dreary Hunchback! Ere her diamond stud, the sun,
Stick in Aurora's habit-shirt, there's business must be done.
The saucy stars are winking at the planets on their beat:
Up! thou hast grovelled long and low—a change will be a treat!"

Punch is then sharply trounced for his sneers at loyalty, religion, and the upper classes, for his "scandal random-flung," for his ignorance of fair-play; then come three of the best stanzas:

Attack on the Whitefriars stronghold.

"Back! foolish Hunchback, to the course that whilome made thy fame,
Back! to thy lawful quarry, to thy Jove-appointed game:

Shoot folly as it flies ; but shoot it with the arrowy joke,
Not with a brazen blunderbuss, all bellow and black smoke.

Give us, once more, the playful wit that notched the legal saw,
That sparkles o'er Hume's *History* now, as once o'er Blackstone's law :
Give us the truthful social sketch, drawn by Titmarshian skill,
With colour bright as Dickens's, and pencil keener still.

Give us the shower of quip and crank, the whimsy and the wile,
Murder vain Fashion's shapeless brood, but murder with a smile.
Poison the rats of Westminster with Hamlet's 'poisoned jest,'
And stab as once Harmodius stabbed, with steel in myrtle dressed."

Admirable as these verses are, they were not, oddly enough, included in the posthumous collection of Shirley Brooks's poems, published by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans. Brooks lived not only to be a leading contributor to *Punch*, but its editor; he was virtual editor during Mark Lemon's later years, and at Lemon's death obtained the post. Excellent in every department of journalism, to the *Punch* proprietary he was simply invaluable: he was the only man on the staff with much knowledge of current politics; his fertility in cartoon-suggestion was extraordinary; he could write verse and prose with almost equal facility; and so vast was his newspaper-reading that he never missed a noticeable point, not merely in the London, but in the provincial press.

Its success

Brooks's value to *Punch*.

The other occasion on which I had been with Dickens in the latter days of '55 was memorable to me as the first of very many subsequent delightful nights, passed among odd scenes in close intimacy with him. We went on what would nowadays be called a "slumming" expedition, quite original in those days, but long since done to death. A friend of Dickens's, a certain M. Delarue, a banker in Genoa, who was on a visit to Tavistock House, had a great desire to see some of the low life of London; and Dickens accordingly arranged with the police for a party of us, of which I was one, to dine early together, and then "go the rounds" of the thieves' quarters in Whitechapel, the sailors' and German sugar-bakers' taverns in Ratcliff Highway, the dens of the Mint, &c. It was a curious experience, but the interest of it to me was greatly increased by the fact that I was in the company of the man whose genius I had worshipped so long and so ardently; and when he called me into the cab, and we returned alone together, he chatting freely and charmingly, I wondered whether Fate could have in store for me greater distinction or delight.

"Slumming" with Dickens.

Meantime I had had opportunities for increasing my literary work. The proprietors of the *Illustrated London Magazine*, a somewhat obscure periodical, having asked Frank Smedley to write them a novel, he managed to have the commission transferred to

An attempt at a novel.

me, of course at a much lower remuneration, and I commenced a serial story called "Arthur Hargrave, or the Uniform of Foolscap," of which I do not remember much, save that it did not run very long, expiring with the magazine. The "London Correspondent's" letter for the *Inverness Courier*, the property of Dr. Carruthers, and one of the most important of northern journals, which had been originally written by Angus Reach, and afterwards by Shirley Brooks, was made over to me, and was for years a regular, if small, source of income. More important in every way was the offer I received from Mr. J. R. Robinson, my former colleague on the *Weekly Chronicle*, who had now become editor of the *Express*, the then evening edition of the *Daily News*, to do some work for him, and occasionally, when an extra hand was wanted, to write a dramatic criticism for the last-named journal. There was, of course, a regular dramatic critic, but he was of a somewhat erratic habit, and Mr. Robinson promised, in case the post became vacant, to use his best endeavours to get me appointed. As it happened, I had only had the occasional employment during some twelve months, when the regular critic, who suffered from heart-disease, fell dead in the street; and after a little interval, during which trial was made of the services of a gentleman who had certain influence with the proprietors, but who failed to give satisfaction, I

The *Inverness Courier*.

Am appointed dramatic critic for the *Daily News*.

was permanently employed on the staff of the *Daily News*.

This appointment made me supremely happy. The salary was four pounds a week, for which I was to undertake the whole of the dramatic criticism, and to assist in the book-reviewing. Any other articles were separately paid for. Taken in connection with my Post Office work and my other journalistic engagements, this new berth completely filled up my time. Of course there were not nearly so many theatres as there are now; but the changes in the playbills, and consequently the necessity of attendance, were much more frequent, and I was kept constantly supplied with books for notice. Literature of the lightest kind was generally assigned to me; but I must have had books of all sorts sent, as among my *Daily News* reviews, which I have preserved, I find long notices of Charlotte Brontë's *Professor* and of Aytoun's *Bothwell*.* When the theatrical season was over, I wrote for the *Daily News* a series of semi-personal,

An enjoyable position.

* Here is a funny story in connection with this. My friend John Hollingshead, who would occasionally help me with my book-notices, once asked me what I knew about Pope. I replied, I knew the *Rape of the Lock*, *Essay on Man*, *Universal Prayer*, &c. But what did I know of Pope's life, friends, surroundings? Nothing, I frankly answered; why did he ask? Because an important book, Carruthers's *Life of Pope*, would shortly be published. A friend of his, Hollingshead's, was, with perhaps one exception, the best-informed Pope man in the world; and if I would hand over the book, this friend should

semi-professional sketches of the principal London players, and a long description of society at Baden, whither my wife and I had gone, in company with Albert Smith, who took that place and the Rhine as his new route to Mont Blanc.

We were a very happy and united body at the

write the notice: but it was to be sent in with my notices, and nothing was to be said as to whose work it was. The friend proved to be William Moy Thomas. The book was duly sent to him, and duly returned with a long and admirable review, full of special knowledge, which I forwarded with my "copy" as usual. It appeared the next day. I took care not to go near the office, but heard that Mr. Weir, the editor, was wonder-struck at its evidence of thorough acquaintance with the subject. But there was some one else who was also struck in the same manner. This was the "perhaps one exception" mentioned by Hollingshead—none other than Mr. Charles Wentworth Dilke, grandfather of the present baronet, ex-editor of the *Athenæum*, who knew everything possible about Pope and his times. Moy Thomas had been his secretary and quasi-pupil: they had had long and frequent discussions on Pope matters; consequently, directly Mr. Dilke saw the *Daily News* notice, he guessed who had written it. But so much interest did he take in the subject that he set off for the newspaper office, and saw his old friend Weir. Of him, after praising the review, he asked who wrote it. "Quite a young man of the name of Yates," he was informed. Impossible! no young man of such a name could have half so much special knowledge. There was only one man in London could have written it. Well, the book was sent to Yates, and the review came from him; that was all the editor could say. Mr. Dilke pretended to be convinced; but, having been himself former editor of the *Daily News*, he knew the master-printer, through whom he got a glimpse of the MS., and satisfied himself he was right.

Daily News office, and from my employers and colleagues I received the greatest kindness and consideration. Sometimes I was invited to one of the weekly "house-dinners" held at the Rainbow or Dick's, in Fleet Street, where I would find our principal proprietor, Mr. George Smith, a lawyer of Golden Square, who did not afterwards prove quite such a clever man of business as he had been reckoned; Mr. Weir, our chief editor—kindest, dearest, and deafest of Scotch gentlemen; Mr. Thomas Walker, the sub-editor; Mr. Robinson, editor of the evening edition; and some of the leader-writers, generally Mr. McCullagh Torrens, Mr.—now Sir Joseph—Arnould, and Mr.—now Professor—Baynes. Among the members of the staff were Mr. George Hogarth, the musical critic, father of Mrs. Dickens; Mr. Lincoln, the secretary; Mr. Copping and Mr. Dyer, sub-editors; Mr. Murphy, an Irish gallery-man and reporter, exact prototype of Thackeray's Hoolan and Doolan; Mr. Godfrey Turner; and, later on, Mr. Pigott. There was also a foreign sub-editor, whose name I forget—a very eccentric person. He was supposed to be a great linguist; but he remains in my mind for his great contempt and hatred of Dickens, a subject on which he was always enlarging. So profound was this contempt that he would never mention Dickens by name: he used to allude to him as "that fellow, you know—Hogarth's son-in-law!"

Some of the *D. N.* staff.

On the 7th May 1856 I made my first appearance in *Household Words*, with a short story called "A Fearful Night," and, encouraged by Dickens and by the assistant editor, William Henry Wills, who, from that time to the day of his death, was one of my best friends, I became a frequent contributor. About the same time, too, Messrs. Routledge published *Our Miscellany*, a collection of prose and verse sketches, contributed by Robert Brough and myself to various magazines, with a cover, on which the authors were admirably caricatured by C. H. Bennett.

First appearance in *Household Words*.

Our Miscellany.

My first essay in dramatic writing, in collaboration with a Post Office friend named Harrington, was a riotous and ridiculous, but at the same time an exceedingly funny, farce called *A Night at Notting Hill*, the theme being the burglaries at the time prevalent in that suburb, which was produced at the Adelphi in the early days of January 1857. Harrington, who had been a professional actor, was well up to the requirements of the stage, and we scored a distinct success. Wright, as an alderman, terrified at the notion of having his house broken into, was exceedingly comic, and he was well seconded by Paul Bedford as a Life Guardsman, hired to protect the premises. The press were heartily unanimous in their reception of this trifle, which had a run of over a hundred nights. Emboldened by our success, my partner and I at once went to work on another farce,

My first farce.

Mr. J. L. Toole.

which we read to Mr. J. L. Toole, whose acquaintance I had made a year or two before, when I went with Albert Smith to the Walworth Institution, and heard Mr. Toole, then an amateur, give a very funny entertainment. He had now made his mark as a professional comedian, and was playing at the Lyceum, under the management of Mr. Charles Dillon.

Another farce.

Mr. Toole received our farce very favourably, and recommended it to his manager, by whom it was accepted. It was called *My Friend from Leatherhead*, and was produced on the 23rd February 1857, with Mr. Toole as the hero, while a small part of a lady's-maid was made conspicuous by the excellent way in which it was filled by Miss M. Wilton—now Mrs. Bancroft. When I saw, next morning, that Oxenford had given us a notice of full half a column in the *Times*, I had no doubt of our success. During the next few years, always in conjunction with Harrington, I wrote several successful farces: a comedietta, called *If the Cap Fits*, the last piece produced by Mr. Charles Kean in his management of the Princess's, was of a different *genre*, of neater construction, and more polished dialogue. It was admirably acted by, among others, Mr. Frank Matthews, Mr. Walter Lacy, and—Miss Ellen Terry, soon after she entered the profession: she played a juvenile groom, a "tiger," with great spirit and vivacity. One of the "entertainments" given at the Gallery of Illustration, about

Mrs. Bancroft.

A comedietta.

Miss Ellen Terry.

this time, by Mr. and Mrs. German Reed, was also from my pen.

Douglas Jerrold.

Early in June this year ('57) England lost one of her wittiest sons—Douglas Jerrold. Though never intimate with him, I had often been in his company, and had heard him flash forth the biting epigram and quick repartee for which in our day he has had no rival. A small delicately-formed bent man, with long gray hair combed back from his forehead, with gray eyes deep set under penthouse brows, and a way, just as the inspiration seized him, of dangling a double eyeglass, which hung round his neck by a broad black ribbon: a kindly man for all his bitter tongue, replying most courteously to a complaint against one of his staff, which I brought before him years ago, and taking care that justice was done: soft and easy with women and children.

Years before, I had been one of a party which had escorted him, after the successful production of one of his comedies—*The Catspaw*, I think—to the Bedford Hotel in Covent Garden, where supper was prepared. Jerrold was flushed with triumph; but his bodily strength was small, and he hung on to my arm. As we went up New Street, we met two or three drunken roysterers, one of whom, after tumbling up against me, apologised, and asked "the way to the Judge and Jury," a popular entertainment of the day. Instantly Jerrold bent forward and

Unpublished *jeux de mots.*

addressed him: "Straight on, young man. Continue in the path you're now pursuing, and you can't fail to come to them!" It was to Peter Cunningham, mentioning his fondness for calves' feet, that Jerrold said, "Extremes meet;" to Mrs. Alfred Wigan, expressing her fear that her hair had been turned gray by the application of some strong stimulant, he said, "I know—essence of thyme!" He was brought to the Fielding Club once as a guest, and was sitting there when the door opened, and Albert Smith appeared. "Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains!" cried some one, in would-be facetious salutation. "Yes," said Jerrold, "and Albert 'half-crowned him long ago!'"

In the spring of the year in which Jerrold died, Mr. Benjamin Webster had a pleasant gathering of friends at his quaint old house by Kennington Church, to celebrate the birthday of his daughter. Jerrold was there, playing whist; in the adjoining room they were dancing. Touching him on the shoulder, I asked, "Who is that man, Jerrold, there, dancing with Mrs. Jerrold?" He looked round for an instant, through the open door. "God knows, my dear boy!" he replied: "some member of the Humane Society, I suppose!" The last time I saw him was little more than a week before his death, at a Sunday Greenwich dinner, given by W. H. Russell, at which Dickens, Delane, Mowbray Morris, Albert and Arthur Smith,

Last time of seeing him.

and many others were present. Jerrold, who looked very ill, and told me he was having his house done up, and was "poisoned by the paint," had been brought down by Dickens in the steamer. He was very *piano*, and I heard him attempt only one joke: when Russell asked Albert Smith to ring the bell for dinner, Jerrold said, "Yes, Albert, why don't you ring that bell(e)?" in allusion to rumours then rife of an engagement between A. S. and Miss Keeley, whom he afterwards married. Jerrold went away early, took to his bed, and died on the Monday week. His death.

On the morning of the funeral I had a letter from Dickens, asking me to dine at the Garrick, as he wanted to talk to me on a matter of business. I went, and found Albert and Arthur Smith of the party. They had all been to the ceremony at Norwood in the morning, and Dickens spoke very strongly of the fuss and flourish with which it had been conducted. The mourners, it seemed, wore bands of crape with the initials "D. J." round their arms, and there was a funeral-car, of which Dickens declared he heard one old woman in the crowd say to another that it was "just like the late Dook o' Wellinton's." After dinner we had pens, ink, and paper, and Dickens unfolded his scheme, which was to raise a fund for the benefit of Jerrold's widow and family. Jerrold's funeral.

It was to be done in the most delicate manner,

For the Jerrold fund.

and all would assist. Thackeray would lecture, so would W. H. Russell; Dickens would give a reading; there would be a performance of *Black-Eyed Susan* at the Adelphi, with the veteran T. P. Cooke in his original character; a performance of the Dickens troupe of amateurs in *The Frozen Deep*, &c. One great point was to let the public know what was intended instantly, whilst Jerrold's death was fresh in their minds; another, not to spend too much money in advertising. With the view of combining these *desiderata*, Dickens drew up a short memorandum for the committee, which he asked me to take round that night to the editors of the principal journals, requesting them to publish it in the morning, with a few introductory lines of their own.

Among the editors

I had some curious experiences that evening. I first went to the *Morning Post*, where I found Mr. (now Sir) Algernon Borthwick in evening clothes, with a smart smoking-jacket substituted for his dress-coat, a courteous gentleman, polished to his finger-tips. Thence to the *Morning Chronicle* in the Strand, opposite Somerset House, where, at the top of a flight of dirty stairs, in a typical newspaper-room, was the then editor—genial, jovial, handsome Thomas Littleton Holt, otherwise known as "Raggedy Holt"—in his shirt-sleeves, and with a foaming porter-pot before him. Next, to the *Daily Telegraph*, then in its

infancy, a very modest establishment in the bend of the Strand, by St. Clement's Church, now pulled down, where I was, of course, kindly received by my friend Mr. J. M. Levy. At the *Advertiser* Mr. James Grant would do all he was asked, save write the introductory lines, which he insisted on my doing then and there; and at the *Times* I saw Mr. Delane, who came out to me when he read Dickens's letter, though his presence at the office had been steadfastly denied.

The programme was carried out, in its entirety, with great success, the sum raised being, I think, over two thousand pounds. Thackeray's lecture was on "Weekday Preachers," in which he made special and admirable reference to Jerrold; and I have a remembrance of Dickens in connection with the performance of *Black-Eyed Susan* at the Adelphi, which always makes me laugh. The part of the Admiral, who presides over the court-martial by which the hero William is condemned to death, was played by a stolid-faced creature, a brother of Paul Bedford's. Dickens said to me at supper that night, "I had a strong idea that Bedford's brother meant to acquit William, and that all the rest of the play would go to the devil!"

Bedford's brother.

As may be readily imagined, I had not very much leisure in the midst of all this employment, but such as I had was always pleasantly passed. Sundays

"Sundays out."

with us were always "Sundays out"—at Skindle's, at that time a delightfully quiet place, with no lawn, no river-rooms, no neighbouring Guards' Club; at Thames Ditton; at Richmond; at the Swan at Staines; at Laker's Hotel at Redhill—sometimes my wife and I alone, oftener with the Keeleys and Albert and a party. On Friday nights there was always a gathering in Gower Street, at the house of Abraham Solomon, who had just made a hit with his picture "Waiting for the Verdict," where would be Millais with his "Huguenot" success upon him, young and handsome, as in the medallion which Alexander Munro had just completed of him; and Frith, putting the finishing touches to his "Derby Day"; Frank Stone, Augustus Egg, and Sant; Dutton Cook, undecided whether to take to pen or pencil as his means of living; Ernest Hart, whose sister Solomon afterwards married; and William Fenn. A quietly Bohemian evening: a little dancing, a few games of "tonneau," a capital supper with a specialty of cold fish, then cigars, and singing by Frank Topham or Desanges, and imitations by Dillon Croker, "and so home."

Among the artists.

Gatherings on a larger scale at Mr. Gambart's, the princely picture-dealer, first in Berners Street, afterwards in the Regent's Park; dances at Mr. Jacob Bell's, admirably superintended by the host's *alter ego*, Mr. "Tom" Hills; frequent festivity in connec-

tion with the Mont Blanc entertainment;* and a general "good time."

Prominent amongst the houses to which we went most frequently, and where we were most heartily welcomed, was that of our neighbour in Doughty Street, Mr. J. M. Levy, who had just acquired the *Daily Telegraph* property, and was concentrating on it all his zeal, acumen, and experience to make his venture a success. He was ably seconded by his son Edward, who at that time wrote the dramatic criticisms amongst other work, and was consequently my constant companion at the theatre. The Sunday

Mr. J. M. Levy.

* There was always a large gathering at the Egyptian Hall on the night preceding a change in the form of entertainment. There was a liberal supply of champagne; Mr. Rule, the well-known *écailler* of Maiden Lane, and his sons, presided over a long counter, and served out oysters and bread and butter; and hot baked potatoes were dispensed by a man described in the programme as "Tatur Khan." The style of invitation was always peculiar. I annex one, lithographed on thin paper, in passport form, which was issued to all intended guests in '55:

"We, Albert Smith, one of Her Britannic Majesty's representatives on the summit of Mont Blanc, Knight of the most noble order of the Grands Mulets, Baron Galignani of Piccadilly, Knight of the Grand Crossing from Burlington Arcade to the Egyptian Hall, Member of the Society for the Confusion of Useless Knowledge, Secretary for his own Affairs, &c. &c.

"Request and require, in the name of His Majesty the Monarch of Mountains, all those whom it may concern, more especially the Police on the Piccadilly Frontier, to allow —— to pass freely in at the street-door of the Egyptian Hall, and up-stairs to the Mont Blanc Room, on the evening

night *réunions* at Mr. Levy's are among my pleasantest reminiscences; but there was no time at which we were not received and treated as part of the family. It is always agreeable to me to think that I was enabled, incidentally, to do my friends real service by introducing to them two gentlemen, Mr. G. A. Sala and the Hon. F. Lawley, who have greatly contributed to the enormous success which the *Daily Telegraph* has attained.

The next year, 1858, was one of vast importance to me.

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of Saturday, Dec. 1, 1855, at 8 P.M., and to afford him every assistance in the way of oysters, stout, champagne, soda and brandy, and other aid of which he may stand in need.

"Given at the Box-office, Piccadilly, 28th day of November 1855. ALBERT SMITH.

"God save the Queen!

"*Vu au bureau de la Salle. Bon pour entrer Piccadilly, par l'Arcade de Burlington.* TRUEFITT.

"Samedi, 1st December 1855.

"*Viséed* for the Garrick and Fielding Clubs, the Vaults below the Houses of Parliament, Truefitt's Hair-cutting Saloon, the Glacier de Gunter, Jullien's, Laurent's, the Café de l'Europe, Pratt's, Limmer's, and all other places on the Rhine, between Rule's Marine Museum, or Appetising Aquarium, and the Jolly Grenadier public-house, No. 1 Ellison Square, Pall Mall, South Sebastopol. RULE.

"*Notice.*—By the recent police enactments regulating large assemblies in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, this passport must be considered as available *for one person only*, and does not include the 'friend' who has always been dining with the bearer."

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY EDITORSHIPS.

1855—1858.

It was in the summer of 1855, when I was twenty-four, and had been married about a couple of years, that I made my first acquaintance with the denizens of British Bohemia—that I became initiated into the mysteries of our equivalent for that *vie de Bohéme* which half a century ago, despite its uncertainty, its poverty, and in many cases its misery, had, in its wild and picturesque freedom from conventionality, sufficient attraction to captivate a large section of the young men of Paris, and which found its brilliant historian in the unfortunate Henri Mürger. Our British Bohemia, as it existed in the days of which I am writing—I am doubtful whether it exists at all now—differed in many respects from that fanciful territory inhabited by Schaunard and his comrades. It was less picturesque, it was more practical and commonplace, perhaps a trifle more vulgar; but its denizens had this in common with their French prototypes—that they were young, gifted, and reckless; that they worked only by fits and starts, and never except under the pressure of necessity; that they

British Bohemia.

were sometimes at the height of happiness, sometimes in the depths of despair, but that ordinarily they passed their lives

"Little caring what might come;
Coffee-milling care and sorrow with a nose-adapted thumb;"

and that—greatest item of resemblance—they had a thorough contempt for the dress, usages, and manners of ordinary middle-class civilisation. The word "Philistine," with its now accepted signification, had not been invented by Mr. Matthew Arnold in those days; but the class which it represents existed, of course, and was the object of general loathing and contempt on the part of the Bohemians.

Thackeray's description of it.

British Bohemia, as it was then, has been most admirably described by Thackeray in *Philip*: "A pleasant land, not fenced with drab stucco like Belgravia or Tyburnia: not guarded by a large standing army of footmen: not echoing with noble chariots, not replete with polite chintz drawing-rooms and neat tea-tables; a land over which hangs an endless fog, occasioned by much tobacco: a land of chambers, billiard-rooms, and oyster-suppers: a land of song: a land where soda-water flows freely in the morning: a land of tin dish-covers from taverns and foaming porter: a land of lotos-eating (with lots of cayenne pepper), of pulls on the river, of delicious reading of novels, magazines, and saunterings in many studios: a land where all men call each other by their Christian names; where

most are poor, where almost all are young, and where, if a few oldsters enter, it is because they have preserved more tenderly and carefully than others their youthful spirits and the delightful capacity to be idle. I have lost my way to Bohemia now," adds the philosopher, writing in the enjoyment of fame and riches; but, he adds with a tender regret, "but it is certain that Prague is the most picturesque city in the world."

From the circumstances of my life—my early marriage, the regular habits formed by, and necessary for, my holding my appointment in the Post Office, and from a certain distaste for a good deal of what formed an integral portion of the career—I was never a real Bohemian. But when my lot was cast among them, and when they saw that, though not "to the manner born," I had many tastes and pursuits in common with theirs, I gradually won my way into their regard, and formed many close friendships, some of which happily exist to this day, while others are among the pleasantest memories of my life. An outsider.

How it was that I first made acquaintance with Bohemia happened thus. I have already mentioned my early essay in verse-writing for the *Illustrated London News*. The connection thus commenced had been extended by my receiving from time to time proofs of wood-engravings, for which I was desired My introduction to it.

to furnish appropriate descriptive letterpress. One day I had a note from Dr. Charles Mackay, then editor of the *Illustrated London News*, wishing to see me. I called in the afternoon, expecting to get one of the usual little commissions; but when I found him sitting with his trusty assistant, Mr. John Timbs, the well-known book-compiler, I soon perceived from his manner that he had something more important to communicate. What he said, in fact, was that there had been a dispute between Mr. Ingram, our proprietor, and Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, the printers, over some trade matter; that the quarrel had rapidly assumed large proportions; and that Mr. Ingram had determined not merely to put an end to all business relations between himself and the Whitefriars firm, but to carry the war into the enemy's country by starting at once a comic paper as a rival to *Punch*. He had talked the question out with Dr. Mackay, who, recognising, as he was good enough to say, some brightness and freshness in my work, had kindly recommended me as the editor. The pecuniary arrangements would be very liberal. Would I undertake the position?

"It's an ill wind," &c.

Of course, I accepted at once—in those days I would have undertaken to edit the *Times* or the *Quarterly Review* if I had had the offer—and I was taken off to be introduced to Mr. Ingram, and hear more of the details of the scheme. I

Mr. Ingram.

found him a little man, with bright eyes, sharp features, and decided manner; he was dressed in ill-fitting clothes, and had a white beaver hat with very long nap, like a country farmer. He was rather uncouth, very brusque, and without much claim to education; but he was an excellent man of business, and to me always liberal, kind, and encouraging. He shook hands with me, heard what I had to say, offered me a salary which was good, and which I thought princely, told me the names of the printers, where to present my accounts, and left the engagement of staff and artists and the entire management in my hands.

Only two things he stipulated for—that the name of the paper should be the *Comic Times*, and that its price should be one penny. These were very important items; I ventured to say—with great internal annoyance at being compelled so soon to differ from my proprietor's views—that to issue a journal with the label of being professedly comic attached to it was a sure way to provoke criticism; while in regard to the price, the experiment of cheap journalism was in its earliest infancy, the *Daily Telegraph* having only been launched a few weeks previously; and I pointed out that it would be highly difficult to obtain the confidence of advertisers for a new and low-priced venture. But Mr. Ingram on these two points was inflexible, and of course I had to give way. My doubts.

It was a difficult position for me, with a very

limited experience of journalism, and no experience at all of editing, and with the thorough knowledge that whatever I might do would be severely criticised by the hundreds of men who would think, and not without reason, that they ought to be in my place. Mr. Ingram, in our short conversation, had expressed his hope, and almost his expectation, that we should soon rival "old Poonch;" and *Punch* was at its very best in those days, with the reflection of Thackeray still on it, with Leech never more bright or more industrious, with Shirley Brooks doing his very utmost—and there has never been so good an all-round writer for a comic journal—to prove how wrong the *Punch* staff had been to keep him so long out of their close borough, and how right they were to have let him in at last; and, worst of all for me, with Mark Lemon for its editor. Not that Lemon was in any way a brilliant or even a suggestive man; but he had had long practice in editing and long experience of his contributors—knew what each man did best, and how most easily to get him to do it. While, under the cloak of corpulent good-nature and jollity, he was exceedingly crafty and *rusé*, as the head man of Messrs. Bradbury & Evans he would naturally depreciate the work in the *Comic Times;* and, as the private secretary of Mr. Ingram—a position which he then held—he would have every opportunity of doing so in a very important quarter. However, I had

Mark Lemon.

embarked on my enterprise, and was determined to carry it through; so I went off at once to get advice, and, if possible, assistance, from Albert Smith.

I found him, as usual, in his foreign blue blouse, pottering about in his sanctum in Percy Street, than which there never was such another room for the collection of extraordinary valueless curiosities, prints, pictures, plaster-casts, and quasi-artistic rubbish of every possible description, thickly overlaid with dust. He was delighted at the chance of my getting work and money, and, while declaring it impossible he could himself write—for the Mont Blanc entertainment was then at the height of its popularity, and absorbed all his attention—he discussed the matter with me; and before I left him we had jotted down the names of several men—some acquaintances, some strangers—out of whom the staff was to be formed. I consult Albert Smith.

One of the first of these names was that of Edward Draper, a solicitor in Westminster, who was Albert's legal adviser, and who is happily still living. A man with a vast amount of dry humour, which found its vent now in prose, now in verse, now in rough, but exceedingly ludicrous, sketches on wood—a practical man, sure to be ready with his "copy" in due time, and certain never to write anything actionable. Mr. Draper was a most desirable contributor, and has been through my life a valued friend. He introduced Godfrey Turner, at that time acting as Edward Draper. Godfrey Turner.

sub-editor of the *John Bull*, whose real literary status has never, as I venture to think, been properly recognised. Of my own personal friends I named Frank Scudamore, W. P. Hale, and John Oxenford.

F. I. Scudamore.

F. I. Scudamore, afterwards so well known for his management of the Government Telegraphs, for which he obtained a C.B.-ship, was at that time a fellow-clerk of mine in the General Post Office. Some years my senior, he had already attracted my admiration by my knowledge of the fact that he was already an accepted contributor to *Punch*, many most admirable sets of verses from his pen having appeared therein. I shall have other opportunities of mentioning Mr. Scudamore, but I may here place on record my opinion that of all the men I have known in my long experience, there was scarcely one to beat him. His powers of organisation at the height of his career were confessedly wonderful, he was a sound classical scholar, wrote by far the best "light" verse of any man living, was a most effective speaker, and had the keenest sense of humour. His versatility was marvellous; he could persuade a Chancellor of the Exchequer into disbursing millions, and turn out a political parody with a lilting *refrain* which would be quoted throughout the provincial press.

W. P. Hale

William Palmer Hale, known to every one as "Billy" Hale, was the eldest son of the Archdeacon of London, educated at Charterhouse and

Oxford, and a member of the Bar. My old friend Thomas Knox Holmes, who occasionally gave Hale work before parliamentary committees, always maintained that it was exceedingly well done; but Billy's taste was more for literature than law, and, after he had obtained a fair amount of success by writing burlesques in collaboration with Frank Talfourd (the judge's eldest son), one of which, *The Willow Pattern Plate*, made a great mark in the early Swanborough Strand days, he did not much trouble the Courts. He was a great beer-drinker, and, though the story has been told of others, it was of him Thackeray said, and said to me, "Good Billy Hale, take him for half-and-half, we ne'er shall look upon his like again!" E. L. Blanchard, the well-known critic and dramatic writer, was introduced to me by Albert Smith, and proved a valuable member of our crew.

E. L. Blanchard

My acquaintance with John Oxenford, begun some year or two previously, had speedily ripened into intimate friendship; for though he was nearly twenty years my senior, a strong and original thinker on many abstruse subjects, and perhaps of all Englishmen then living the deepest read in German literature and philosophy, he was full of the most delightful humour, and had the animal spirits of a boy. His hair was snow-white in those days, though he was not more than forty-three; but his dark eyes under his

John Oxenford.

grizzled brows were full of fire and fun. No man had greater horror of an impostor, or of the slightest attempt at the assumption of swagger; but where he took a liking he attached himself firmly, and was the sweetest, the most delightful companion. No one ever wore his learning so lightly, or conveyed it so unconsciously and unpretendingly; no man so thoroughly equipped with vast stores of erudition ever passed through a long life known to the many only as the lightest literary sharp-shooter.

By the general public, or I may say by only that portion of it which takes an interest in theatrical matters, he was known as the dramatic critic of the *Times;* but in those columns, although to readers between the lines there was constant evidence of keen analysis and subtle humour, the great intellectual powers of the man were never to be recognised. Why, he told me more than once, in long delightful chats in tavern parlours, where he would sit with me alone, over a clay "churchwarden" pipe and a pot of ale, and beguile hour after hour with his fancies, delivered in jerky sentences, in a rumbling monotone. When he first took up dramatic criticism for the *Times*—his first employment on the paper had been in the office of its then City editor, Mr. Alsager, a relation of his —he wrote unreservedly his opinion not merely of the play under notice, but of the actors. One of these, being somewhat sharply criticised, appealed in a

His genius

Why he "let people down easily."

strong letter to the editor, which Mr. Delane showed to John Oxenford. "I have no doubt you were perfectly right in all you wrote," said the great editor to the embryo critic; "but that is not the question. The real fact is that these matters are of far too small importance to become subjects for discussion. Whether a play is good or bad, whether a man acts well or ill, is of very little consequence to the great body of our readers, and I could not think of letting the paper become the field for argument on the point. So in future, you understand, my good fellow, write your notices so as much as possible to avoid these sort of letters being addressed to the office. You understand?"

Oxenford understood; and in that interview the *Times* editor voluntarily threw away the chance of being supplied with dramatic criticism as keen in its perspicacity as Hazlitt's, as delightful in its geniality as Lamb's. An acutely conscientious man would, under the circumstances, have declined the task; but Oxenford, though never pressed by poverty—his father, with whom he lived until within the last ten years of his life, was a well-to-do merchant, with a house in John Street, Bedford Row—knew the value of money; his position as theatrical censor of the *Times*, though poorly paid (his salary was only five pounds a week), gave him great weight with managers, and it must be recollected he was dramatist

Irresponsibility.

as well as critic. Finally, he was glad to be relieved from the responsibility and the hard work which thoughtful criticism would have entailed; glad to be spared the necessity of wounding the feelings of any of those with whom he lived on intimate terms; glad to be spared time and brain-power for other and more remunerative work. Thenceforward his *Times* notices, written on the principle of being pleasant all round, were amusing essays, in which the learning of the writer was sometimes apparent, and where, to the initiated, a delightful humour was always cropping up; but they were not criticisms such as Oxenford could have written had he been permitted, or such as he frequently orally delivered to two or three appreciative friends.

Where his real genius comes out.

The outcome of John Oxenford's large store of reading is to be found in cyclopædias and reviews, in his rendering of Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*, in his translation of Friedrich Jacob's *Hellas*, his work for Bohn's Standard Library, his articles on Molière and other biographical papers in Knight's *Penny Cyclopædia* and the *Westminster Review*. The charm of his fancy illumines scores of songs, original and translated; the delicate flavour of his humour still preserves from decay a dozen comediettas and farces, one of which, *Twice Killed*, after being translated into French as an operetta, under the title *Bonsoir, Signor Pantalon*, was retranslated,

and made its appearance in operatic garb on the English stage.

"And be sure you get Sala and the Broughs," were Albert Smith's last words as he followed me to the door.

Mr. George Augustus Sala, who has from time to time been my honoured comrade and colleague through the whole of my literary career, is happily alive and well, having obtained the universal recognition of his abilities, having reached the topmost rung of the ladder of journalism, having, in fine, achieved the success which we, his youthful fellow-labourers, always predicted for him. His appearance in the narrative of these desultory reminiscences will be frequent, as we have had so many enterprises in common; but at the time of which I am writing I had only seen him once, at the Fielding Club, whither he had been brought from Rule's oyster-shop, where he was supping, to be presented to the Duke of Sutherland, then Marquis of Stafford, and some of his friends, who were loud in praise of an American story, "Colonel Quagg's Conversion," which had just appeared in *Household Words*. Who could have written it? was the question; which was speedily solved by Albert Smith, who declared he had just left the author, and went away, returning in triumph with a slim modest young fellow, about six-and-twenty years of age. It would be impertinence in

Mr. G. A. Sala.

My first sight of him.

me to speak of Mr. Sala's life-work, lying immediately before the world as most of it is; but I may be perhaps permitted to say that in the volumes of *Household Words* from '53 to '56 are to be found essays which not merely the author of *Paris Herself Again* and *America Revisited* has never surpassed, but which Goldsmith or Lamb might have been proud to father. Like Thackeray, Mr. Sala has "long since lost his way to Bohemia," though in my time at least that picturesque country has never had so famous a denizen, unless it were the younger of the once famous Brothers Brough, Robert Barnabas Brough.

The Brothers Brough.

"Bill" and "Bob" to their friends, in the "land where men call each other by their Christian names," or "clean Brough and clever Brough," the sarcastic but well-fitting distinction drawn between them by a cynical acquaintance; for William the methodical was neat and wholesome, with fresh complexion and trim beard and decent clothes, and Robert the brilliant was sallow and sickly, poor fellow, and wholly careless of his personal appearance—the Brothers Brough, in fine, were the sons of a man engaged in commerce, of whom they always spoke with much affection, and who gave them a plain English education. On this somewhat slender foundation both of them, in later life, raised a fair superstructure of learning. Both acquired French, and Bob had added a certain amount of German and Spanish to his store.

All this to his credit; for while he was a scholar, he was a producer; while he was grinding away at his Ollendorff, he was thinking out his article, or planning his piece, or racking his weary brain for jokes for his forthcoming burlesque.

"Literary men."

The gentlemen who just about this time were establishing a new school of critical literature were constantly either savagely ferocious or bitterly sarcastic with professional literary men—persons, that is to say, who lived by the product of their pens, who in most cases had not had the advantage of that University education in which their detractors gloried, and which enabled them to turn the Ode to Thaliarchus into halting English verse, or to imbue with a few classical allusions their fierce political essay or flippant critical review. And, save that he was endowed with more and finer brains than the average run of humanity, Robert Brough was the exact type of the class thus bitterly reviled. Spurning the life of commercial drudgery to which he was originally destined, he commenced on his own account at a very early age, and awoke the echoes of his dull prosaic native town with the cracking of his witty whip.

Robert Brough's start in life.

The *Liverpool Lion* was a new feature in the annals of the Mersey's pride. The merchant-princes, the brokers, the shipping-agents, the great outfitters, and the rest of them had gone through life without much

conception of fun. They looked through the pages of *Punch*, perhaps, while digesting their heavy midday meal, and smiled at Leech's glorious cartoons, while understanding little about them. But here was a revelation of wild humour brought into their very midst; here were caricatures which every one recognised, allusions which all understood. Leech's portrait of Lord Palmerston, whom they had never seen, was not to be compared to the *Lion's* likeness of the Recorder; and no joke in ancient or modern times could compete with the manner in which the Chairman of the Brokers' Association was "taken off" in that song to the tune of the "King of the Cannibal Islands." Those who wish to inform themselves of the manner of Robert Brough's early life-work should read his novel, *Marston Lynch*, of which the author is the hero. I say early life-work; but it was all, in fact, early enough, for he was but five or six and thirty when he died. But in the *Liverpool Lion* is to be seen the germ of most of what distinguished his later writings —the bright wit, the strange quaint fancy, the readiness to seize upon topics of the hour, and present them in the quaintest garb: the exquisite pathos was not there, nor the bitter savagery, though gleams of this last were not wanting.

At Liverpool.

I have often wondered what gave Robert Brough that deep vindictive hatred of wealth and rank and respectability which permeated his life, and which so

surprised me, who had been bred up in a mild Conservatism. It was probably innate; it was certainly engrained. It was largely increased by poverty, by ill-health, by an ill-regulated life, by an ever-present conviction that there lay in him power to produce work of very superior quality to that already published—power which was nullified by his own weakness of will. His was the poetic temperament, sensitive, nervous, irritable; his too the craving after ignoble sources of alleviation in times of mental depression, and the impossibility of resisting temptation, come in what form it might.* His character.

He was a Radical, a Republican even, but something—partly his gentle nature, and doubtless greatly his wonderfully keen perception of the ludicrous—kept him from emulating the literary achievements of the political contributors to the cheap Sunday press. His was not the coarse many-syllabled fustian of a "Publicola" or a "Gracchus," produced according to the laws of demand and supply, and paid for by a weekly wage. Robert Brough's was the real fierce hatred His Radicalism.

* On his twenty-ninth birthday he wrote me a letter, commencing,

> "I'm twenty-nine! I'm twenty-nine!
> I've drank too much of beer and wine;
> I've had too much of love and strife;
> I've given a kiss to Johnson's wife,[1]
> And sent a lying note to mine—
> I'm twenty-nine! I'm twenty-nine!

[1] Strictly true, but the name is *not* Johnson.—R. B. B."

welling up from an embittered soul, and finding its vent in verse. Here is the *mot de l'énigme:*

"There is a word in the English tongue,
Where I'd rather it were not;
For shams and lies from it have sprung,
And heartburns fierce and hot:
'Tis a tawdry cloak for a dirty soul:
'Tis a sanctuary base,
Where the fool and the knave themselves may save
From justice and disgrace:
'Tis a curse to the land, deny it who can,
That self-same boast, 'I'm a gentleman.'"

That is the opening of a poem contained in a little thin volume called *Songs of the Governing Classes*, by Robert Brough, published in 1855, the year of which I am writing, by Vizetelly. It had scarcely any sale, and has been unprocurable for many years. From the freedom of its speech, the vigour of its thought, and the polish of its workmanship, it was a very remarkable production; but neither its sentiments nor its statements would bear analysis, and its teachings were dangerous and uncalled for. It goes on:

A remarkable production.

"You may leave your wife, with her children six,
In a ditch to starve and pine,
And another man's take, in a palace rich,
With jewels and gold to shine;
You may flog your horse or your dog to death;
You may shoot, in a fit of rage,
A helpless groom, and an easy doom
You'll meet from the jury sage:
'There's been provocation—deny it who can?
For we see at a glance he's a gentleman!'"

In his preface he says that, being only known as "a

profane jester and a satirist" (as Ruskin said of Salvator Rosa), the public may refuse to take him *au sérieux;* he admits that he has certainly made jokes for a livelihood, just as he should have made boots, if brought up to the business, and seeing no harm or disgrace in either calling. But he does not see that he is thereby disqualified from giving serious utterance to his feelings on vital questions, as well as his neighbours. "The feeling, of which the following ballads are the faint echo and imperfect expression, is a deeply-rooted belief that to the institution of aristocracy in this country (not merely to its undue preponderance, but to its absolute existence) is mainly attributable all the political injustice, and more especially the grovelling moral debasement, we have to deplore." Limned by such an artist, it can be readily imagined that the "Portraits" of the aristocracy, with which the volume commenced, were not too flattering. The first, "The Marquis de Carabas," a fancy one, is thus sketched:

Songs of the Governing Classes.

"Look at his skin—at fourscore years
How fresh it gleams and fair!
He never tasted ill-dressed food,
Or breathed in tainted air.
The noble blood flows through his veins
Still, with a healthful pink.
His brow scarce wrinkled! *Brows keep so*
That have not got to think.
Chapeau bas!
Chapeau bas!
Gloire au Marquis de Carabas!"

And again:

"They've got him in—he's gone to vote
Your rights and mine away:
Perchance our lives, should men be scarce,
To fight his cause for pay.
We are his slaves! he owns our lands,
Our woods, our seas, our skies:
He'd have us shot like vicious dogs,
Should we in murmuring rise!
Chapeau bas!" &c.

William Brough.

His elder brother, William, was very differently constituted. He had been, early in life, apprenticed to a printer, and there was always about him a business-like manner, and an appreciation of the punctuality and good faith necessary for business relations. Among his Bohemian friends he was remarkable for his neat and dapper appearance. Bob once declared him to be the "sort of man they would put on a jury;" and while not stinting himself in conviviality, he was probably more mindful of the morrow and its requirements than most of his comrades. These qualifications, and, above all, his practical knowledge of printing, power of roughly estimating what so much "copy" would "make" when set up in type, made him very useful to a neophyte like myself, and I speedily established him as my sub-editor.

The writers named constituted, I think, the literary staff, though we had occasional assistance from Albert Smith, Sutherland Edwards (now well known as critic, correspondent, and valuable authority on

musical matters), and John V. Bridgeman. There always has been, and there certainly was in those early days, a difficulty in finding suitable artists for a comic publication. As my stock contributors, I was lucky in obtaining the services of Charles H. Bennett, then in the commencement of his career, whose undeniable talent was afterwards recognised by his engagement on *Punch;* and William McConnell, a young man who was just making his mark in illustrating the shilling books then coming into vogue. Later on he obtained great praise for his clever outline illustrations of Mr. Sala's *Twice Round the Clock.* Mr. Newman and Mr. Henning occasionally sent sketches, and subsequently Sala and Robert Brough added to the piquancy of certain of their articles by rough but very humorous wood-drawings.

Artists of the staff.

The first number of the *Comic Times* was dated Saturday, August 11, 1855, and was, like all first numbers, but a poor sample of what the periodical afterwards became. I do not recognise Robert Brough's hand in it, from first to last; but Sala commenced a series of papers called "The Hermit in the Box; being the Experiences of Silas Bulgrummer, Stage-Door-keeper," which ran through several numbers, and are full of close observation and quaint fancy. There was some mild punning by William Brough, some recondite humour of John Oxenford's, some poetry by Hale, and a clever opening address in delightful rhyme by

The *Comic Times.*

Frank Scudamore. In the second number Robert Brough commenced "The Barlow Papers," which were the success of the publication. "Billy Barlow," the hero of a comic song then in the height of its popularity, became a contributor in Brough's person, and wrote on every kind of current topic in every kind of verse, but never proceeding for long without some harking back to the *refrain* of the original comic song. Here Brough's sardonic humour had full play. Being wholly unfettered by his subject or its treatment, he could give it those little "tavern-touches" in which his soul delighted; and the result was that "William Barlow," whose adventures were speedily illustrated by their author, became a popular favourite.

Short-lived.

This my first bantling had a short but merry career of three months; merry, that is to say, for its editor and contributors, though I doubt if Mr. Ingram saw much fun in his venture. He never grumbled, and his cheques were furnished with praiseworthy regularity; but he could not but have been dissatisfied with the result of his experiment. We all worked very hard; but the circulation, though it gradually rose, never came to anything like paying point. Its business management was bad; it was never properly advertised or quoted; it was hated at the *Illustrated News* office as an interloper; and it was systematically decried and cold-shouldered by Mark Lemon, who, as I have said, was Mr. Ingram's

private secretary, and who, having with unctuous adroitness healed the breach between his master and his other employers, Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, determined that our poor little effort should be stamped out at once.

The method which he adopted for accomplishing his purpose was so characteristic and so comic that even at this distance of time I am amused on recalling it. It was late in November, and we had just published a *Comic Times Almanack* for the coming year, on which I prided myself considerably. Every one had done his best, and the result was really funny and amusing. So the public seemed to think, for they bought the Almanack with an avidity which they had never shown for the ordinary issue. The worthy cashier, Mr. Plummer, who audited my accounts, and whose manner towards me hitherto would have been severe in his loyalty to Mr. Ingram, had it not been softened by a little feeling of pity and personal regard for myself, at last smiled and congratulated me. It was very good indeed, he said; and with that spirit of partisanship which is always to be found in all persons however remotely connected with the inside or outside of literary production, he added, chuckling, "And they won't like it at Whitefriars." In this remark Mr. Plummer showed his business aptitude: by "Whitefriars" in those days we used to indicate the *Punch* office, which was

Our Almanack.

there situate; and by the "*Punch* people"—Messrs. Bradbury & Evans ("B. & E."), its proprietors, Mark Lemon, its editor, and the staff in general—our Almanack was thought so dangerously good that it was felt the time had arrived when we must be put an end to.

All this I learned long afterwards from one of the band, but at that moment I had no idea save that of utilising the temporary success we had gained. I would persuade Mr. Ingram into advertising the paper; I would get the business management put on a better system; I would do this and that and the other; and no happier or more many-planned Alnaschar ever walked down the Strand and into Milford House, where I found Mr. Ingram, with the baleful shadow of the corpulent Lemon looming large behind him. The day was Saturday, and though at that time there was no regular half-holiday, it was customary to "knock off work" a little earlier than usual. Mr. Ingram, in the large fluffy hat and the large-patterned silk *cache-nez* so familiar to his friends, was on the point of starting off for Brighton, so he hurriedly said: but he wanted to see me "very partick'lar, very partick'lar indeed;" could I not breakfast with him at the New Ship Inn at Brighton the next morning?

Alnaschar

I saw my way to a little outing, combining business with pleasure, and agreed to be with him at

10 A.M. Accordingly that evening my wife and I went down to Brighton to some cheap lodgings in Camelford Street which we were in the habit of frequenting. I told her she would have to breakfast alone, as I was engaged to Mr. Ingrâm; and on Sunday morning, after a lovely swim at Brill's Baths, I presented myself at the New Ship.

Mr. Ingram's room was on the first floor, I was told. I went up, knocked, and had the door promptly opened to me by Mark Lemon! He smiled expansively, rubbed his own hands, and seized mine. Over his broad shoulders I could see the room, the table laid for an excellent meal, Ingram with "shining morning face" and in his Sunday clothes, and two ladies in whom I recognised Mrs. Ingram and Mrs. Lemon. Mark tried to bar the entrance with his portly person, but I pushed past him: I shook hands with Ingram, I bowed to the ladies; then Lemon caught me again, he seized my hand, he shook it, he shook it as we progressed all round the room; he never left off shaking it, and gently propelling me, until he had shaken me out on to the landing and shut the door between us.

Mark Lemon's device.

I saw the hopeless impossibility of seeking an interview with my proprietor under such circumstances, and turned ruefully back to my little lodgings in search of breakfast. It seems scarcely credible that I can have been routed after such a fashion, but this is an exact statement of the facts as they occurred. It

The basket of eggs falls!

must be remembered that Lemon was an old stager with considerable influence over Mr. Ingram, and that I was a very young man with no influence at all, and the chances of the contest being so unequal I thought justified me in thus readily accepting my defeat.*

At all events, defeated I was, and I was soon made to learn it. On the Tuesday morning I received a letter from Mr. Plummer, very business-like but not uncourteous, informing me that Mr. Ingram had "had enough" of the *Comic Times*, and desiring me to bring the existence of that periodical to a close as speedily as possible. It did not require much winding up, poor little leaflet! Another number —there were only sixteen in all—finished it up, and the first of my literary progeny died with scarcely a struggle.

Death of the *C. T.*

But, though the publication had come to an untimely end, its creators and contributors remained, full of life and hope. During the four months in which we had been thrown together a great feeling of natural liking had sprung up amongst us; the weekly symposia, held in the tavern parlour where the contents of the coming number had been arranged, had

* I have little doubt now, on thinking over the matter, that Mr. Ingram had fully made up his mind to discontinue the issue of the paper, and that Lemon's quaint strategy merely relieved his patron of the trouble of breaking the news to me.

proved most delightful *réunions;* and there was a universal feeling of regret that they should be discontinued. Of course there was no actual reason for the cessation; for though the literary preparation of the *Comic Times* involved delicious suppers and hot grogs and fragrant pipes, the suppers, grogs, and pipes could all have been discussed without any excuse of business. It was universally felt, however, that that would not do; we must find some one, some "capitalist"—that is the word always used in connection with such schemes—who would resuscitate the glories of the *Comic Times*, or start some new organ with editor and staff ready to his hand. Determination.

The search for this much-desired being was delegated to practical William Brough, but in it he failed dismally. The success of *Punch*—and in those days "B. & E.'s" publication had not merely a very large circulation, but considerable social influence—had called into existence a host of intended rivals, which, after enjoying an ephemeral popularity—for there was good writing in most of them, contributions from James Hannay, and Watts Phillips (a man equally facile with pen or pencil), Sutherland Edwards, and Augustus Mayhew amongst others—had died out. *Puck*, the *Puppet-Show*, *Pasquin*, *Diogenes*, and many others had been started on the money provided by "capitalists" of all kinds, Search for a capitalist.

wholly unconnected with journalism very often, and after a spurt and a fizzle had expired of inanition. The thing was played out for a time—how often has it been revived since!—and not merely was no capitalist forthcoming, but William Brough could find no publisher, printer, or paper-maker to back our venture, and wait for his money until we succeeded.

But we determined that our intention should not be frustrated, and after long discussion we decided upon forming ourselves into a kind of joint-stock company—it was long before the "limited" days—and bringing out a magazine. The price was to be a shilling, its name *The Train;* writers and artists were to contribute gratis, expecting nothing until the success was established; a subscription of 10*l.* each (120*l.* in all) constituted our capital. I was chosen editor, principally because my ways of life were less erratic than those of most of my friends, and my Post Office occupation would give me a certain amount of stability in the eyes of those business people with whom we should have to deal. The Train-band had all the component elements of the staff of the *Comic Times*, with the addition of Frank Smedley, who joined us at once at my suggestion. All the articles were to be signed by the writers. We agreed unanimously that anonymity was the bane of literature, and that, if we made no money by our venture, at least we would advertise our names. So, on the 1st of

The Train is started.

January 1856, heralded by very few advertisements, *The Train*, in a green cover, with a pretty vignette of the express emerging from a tunnel, with the motto *Vires acquirit eundo*, made its first appearance.

Not exactly in the form originally intended. I had hoped that the leading serial story—we were to have two—would have been written by Sala. Everything was arranged to that effect; our erratic friend had thought over his plot, had settled on his title, "Fripanelli's Daughter," and had given McConnell the subject for an illustration. Time passed without my receiving any of the MS., and I was getting anxious. My own business habits were so methodical that I had often been surprised at the total failure of most of my comrades to comprehend the meaning of the word punctuality; but hitherto this shortcoming had only affected publishers, the natural enemies of our race; now it would tell, and tell seriously, against the welfare of our little republic just starting into existence.

An erratic brother.

We were already in December, and I was getting desperate. Not merely had I heard nothing of Sala, but no one had seen him for a week; it was his whim to let no one know where he lived, and we had often laughed over the peculiarity. But now it was no laughing matter. There were certain haunts at which, at certain hours, he could generally be found; but lately he had deserted them. My col-

What is to be done?

leagues were as anxious as myself. We held a conclave; we drew up an advertisement couched in mysterious terms, intelligible only to the initiated, and inserted it in the *Times*. It commenced, I recollect, "Bohemian, where art thou?" and I saw it the other day, to my infinite amusement, reproduced in a volume compiled from the "agony column." It elicited no reply, and we were in despair. The magazine could not appear without some serial story which would evoke public interest and sympathy; and the one I had by me, "Mr. Watkins's Apprentice," by William Brough, had no such claim.

Robert Brough fills the breach.

Then Robert Brough threw himself into the breach. He had had no experience of tale-writing, but he would tell the story of his own life—a not uneventful one so far; and we were all delighted at the notion, knowing the grace and charm with which he would invest it. He set to work with a will, and our new magazine opened with two chapters of "Marston Lynch: his Life and Times; his Friends and Enemies; his Victories and Defeats; his Kicks and Halfpence." It was capitally illustrated by McConnell, and I utilised the drawing which that clever artist had made for "Fripanelli's Daughter" as a tailpiece at the end of the second chapter of "Marston Lynch," with which it had nothing whatever to do.

The number was good throughout. Sala was not unrepresented; before his mysterious disappearance

he had left with me a paper called "The Parisian Nights' Entertainments," an admirable Salaesque description of a night among the booths and *baraques* of the boulevards on the eve of the Jour de l'An. Robert Brough had a really lovely poem, and Frank Smedley some pretty verse; Hale had some lines, commencing "Too often I've pledged in October's brown draught," reading which aloud, Brough said, "Billy is nothing if not true;" Edward Draper, a sound article on John Wilkes, with the demagogue's head beautifully drawn by Charles Bennett, after Hogarth's portrait; Bridgeman and I each contributed a social essay; and the number wound up with a dramatic dialogue, "Nights at the Round Table," an imitation of Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, mention of which leads me to a digression.

Contents of No. 1.

While engaged in the preparation of our first number we heard that, simultaneously with our own, a rival periodical was to be issued; and before we had made any announcement, appeared the prospectus of a new shilling magazine, to be called *The Idler*, which was not merely to be amusing and delightful, of course, but which was to lash the ignorant, the incompetent, the presumptuous, and all others whom the promoters of the new organ considered as requiring correction "with a rod pickled in classic brine." If there had been any doubt as to the leading spirit in the opposition

The Idler.

camp, the prospectus, and notably the phrase just quoted, would have set it at rest, and pointed to James Hannay, a young man of great talent, fair education, a certain power of sarcastic invective, a ponderous but fluent speaker, and a vehement political partisan; endowed, moreover, with singular powers of fascination over certain young men. One of these, the bearer of a name distinguished in philanthropy, himself the nephew of an eminent prelate, had recently succeeded to an inheritance, and determined to employ a portion of it in furthering the cause to which he was devoted and the man whom he admired. He gathered round him several very clever young fellows, some fresh from the University, among them Mr. T. E. Kebbel, Mr. H. W. Sotheby, Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, Mr. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, Mr. Wiltshire Austin, and Mr. E. Forster Blanchard. The editor, in spirit if not in name, was James Hannay; and under these auspices, and in a yellow cover, *The Idler* burst upon the world.

James Hannay.

"Idlers."

The rivalry between the two newly-born periodicals was, of course, intense. We, in our adversaries' opinion, were Radicals, scoffers, ribalds, ignoramuses, lacking the blessings of a University education—mere pressmen, living by our wits, and without many of them to live on. We held the opposition to be bigoted Tories, self-sufficient prigs, hammering out their thin coating of classics to cover their otherwise

universal ignorance; and we ridiculed their mission to judge and castigate society. The animosity ran very high before either venture was launched, and in the "Nights at the Round Table" one of the contributors was made to ask, "Who are the people on *The Idler?*" This was the reply: "Hannay & Co., University and water, with a dash of—no, not gin, but a little cheap claret in it; fellows who, if you once get into their pillory, will pelt you with Greek roots, like so many cabbage-stumps." It was smart, and it called forth a bitter reply. Sala and Brough were, deservedly, regarded as the leading lights of *The Train*. In the second number of *The Idler* the bit of dialogue above given was quoted, with the following epigram:

Literary amenities.

> "Easy to see why S. and B.
> Dislike the University;
> Easy to guess why B. and S.
> Detest cold water little less:
>
> For as their writings prove their creed,
> That men who write should never read,
> Their faces show they think it bosh
> That men who write should ever wash!"

I heard nothing of Sala until I received a letter from him, dated "2 Rue Racine, Paris," ten days after the appearance of our first number. He had been very ill, he said, "utterly incapable of work," and, though better, still suffering from "an incessant horrible pain in my head that nearly drives me mad."

Mr. Sala in Paris.

He mentioned having seen Dickens, who was then living over the carriage-factory in the Champs Elysées, and who "is most kind and jolly, and I think will do anything for me." Sala must at this early period have given some thought to the Hogarth papers, which he did not write for years, and must even then have talked of them with Thackeray, under whose editorship they were eventually published in the *Cornhill;* for he says, "He" (Dickens) "knows all about the *book* from Thackeray, but not its title; and learning that from me, gave me two books about Hogarth." I may here say that, though "Fripanelli's Daughter" never saw the light, and "The Countess Nadiejda," another promised serial from the same pen, came to a sudden and abortive conclusion, Mr. Sala did some admirable work in the earlier issues of *The Train.* An article on "Robson," which first appeared there, has been frequently quoted as an extraordinary example of original and powerful dramatic criticism; and there is a grim horror in "The Paper on the Wall," a description of the fantastic appearance of inanimate objects to a sick man's disordered fancy, which is Hoffmannesque in its weirdness.

His work for *The Train.*

I have little doubt that the infant Fripanelli would have been born, and the Russian Countess would have flourished in our pages, but for the fact that Mr. Sala's visit to Paris at this time, and his friendly intercourse with Dickens, led the way to the first

momentous event in his life—his being despatched two months later on a *Household Words* mission to St. Petersburg, to be recorded in that publication as "A Journey due North." On his outward journey he sent me, for *The Train*, a very clever ballad, "Carmen Stettinense—'Caviar and Rüdesheimer,'" two verses of which I extract: His journey to St. Petersburg.

"The King of Prussia drinks champagne,
Old Porson drank whate'er was handy:
Maginn drank gin, Judge Blackstone port,
And many famous wits drink brandy.
Stern William Romer drinketh beer,
And so does Tennyson the rhymer;
But I'll renounce all liquors for
My Caviar and Rüdesheimer.

* * * * *

If some kind heart that beats for me
This troubled head could e'er be pressed on;
If in the awful night, this hand
Outstretched a form I loved could rest on;*
If wife, or child, or friend, or dog
I called my own, in any clime—a,
This lyre I'd tune to other strains
Than Caviar and Rüdesheimer."

This came enclosed in a most amusing letter, telling me, among other things, of his travelling adventures:

"I am going halves with a Russian in a carriage and post-horses, the former the most remarkable cruelty-van you ever

* There is no occasion, now, for any sympathy with this wail. Mr. Sala has been for many years happily and fortunately married.

saw, which we are to sell again when we get to the Russian frontier. My friend the Russian speaks every language under the sun, and is very likely a spy; but it is very little he can get out of me. Cookery, the opera, lords and ladies are the staple subjects of conversation, and to all questions I find the reply, that 'J'ai des affaires à St. Pétersbourg,' that I have letters of introduction to the American Minister, and that Baron Steiglitz is my banker, quite satisfactory."

Newspaper criticism on No. 1.

The reception of the magazine by the London and provincial press was very flattering, and in the—at that time—powerful *Examiner*, which usually ignored any light and flippant publications, the great John Forster was kind enough to speak very encouragingly of our efforts in a notice which commenced, "*The Train* starts full of very pleasant talkers." These remarks, I remember, had great weight with our publishers, Messrs. Groombridge of Paternoster Row, worthy gentlemen, whose attention had hitherto been devoted to the production of a very different style of literature—works on science, botany, and zoology—and who were always, I thought, somewhat nervous as to what might be among the contents of *The Train*. We had a very fair sale, and the look-out for the future was promising.

In the second number Robert Brough commenced a series of translations of "The Ballads and Romantic Poems of Victor Hugo," presenting the graceful fancies of the original in an English garb which was equally graceful and attractive. These translations were continued for several months.

In number three I published a poem by "Lewis Carroll," under which pseudonym, then first adopted, the author has since won vast popularity with *Alice in Wonderland* and similar works. Many pieces originally contributed to *The Train* are reproduced in Mr. "Carroll's" later books. By this it will be seen that the magazine did not long remain a close borough, but that we were glad to avail ourselves of suitable extraneous assistance, which was, I am bound to say, very freely offered. Rising young writers liked the association, and were glad to contribute to our pages, though aware that no payment was forthcoming, while men of achieved reputation, like my old friends Palgrave Simpson and John Oxenford, occasionally sent me always welcome articles. In the first volume I find a little poem, "Tempora Mutantur," by Frederick Locker, the first, I believe, which he ever published, and which is incorporated in his *London Lyrics*. Mr. Hain Friswell, Dr. Maurice Davies, Mr. Thomas Archer, and Mr. Albany Fonblanque were also acceptable recruits.

Later contributors.

With the commencement of our third volume, a year after our commencement, we had a valuable accession to our staff in the person of John Hollingshead, whose acquaintance I had just made, and with whom I became very intimate. He had at that time essayed no literary flight, and I think his first productions are printed in *The Train*. They were

Mr. John Hollingshead.

marked by great originality, quaint humour, and strong common sense: they made their mark at once. Mr. John Hollingshead then adopted literature as a profession, and continued it with excellent results, until he went into the more lucrative calling of theatrical manager. His most intimate friend at that time, as now, was William Moy Thomas, who even then had made a name as a sound English scholar, clever critic, and pungent writer. At Hollingshead's suggestion, Moy Thomas sent us several articles: one, a scathing criticism of Griswold's *Life of Poe*, created some sensation at the time, and would well bear reproduction.

Mr. Moy Thomas.

To Hollingshead's introduction, too, we owed the contributions of a new artist, which about this time appeared in our pages. I will not name the gentleman, for I believe he lives and prospers, and has doubtless greatly improved in his art. What it was in those early days may be guessed from an observation of Thackeray's. The magazine was sent by my orders to the Garrick Club, and I used to be very proud to see it lying amongst its elder brethren on the table of the little reading-room up-stairs. I used furtively to cut its leaves, but I had no notion that any one read it, until one day Thackeray surprised me by saying, "You have a new artist on *The Train*, I see, my dear Yates! I have been looking at his work, and I have

Thackeray on one of our artists

solved a problem. I find there *is* a man alive who draws worse than myself!" It was in the third volume, too, that I first began a series called "Men of Mark," which in style and treatment was really the forerunner of the "Celebrities at Home," and the first examples of which were Dr. Russell and Mr. Wilkie Collins.

It is needless to say much more about the fortunes or misfortunes of *The Train*. The spirit of *camaraderie*, the desire to emancipate ourselves from the thraldom of the publisher and to be our own masters, died out in many of us when we found that we had miscalculated our strength or the public taste, and that calls instead of dividends were the result of our speculation. It was not to be expected that men who lived by their work would, after a time, give that work gratis while they could get money for it. Some held bravely on to the end; but there were important defaulters, and for the last nine or ten months I had no contributions from the original artists, and had to depend on any drawings I could beg, so that the poor magazine declined in quality, and its circulation, which never had been great, became very small. Finally, after a career of two years and a half, *The Train* stopped running altogether. As its conductor I had gained valuable editorial experience. But I had paid for it. For, during its thirty months' existence, besides our ori-

The Train stops.

ginal joint-stock funds, which were speedily exhausted, it had absorbed over nine hundred pounds, some of which had already come out of my pocket, but for the major portion of which I was still responsible at the time of its winding up.

Poor Pillicoddy!

END OF VOL. I.

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